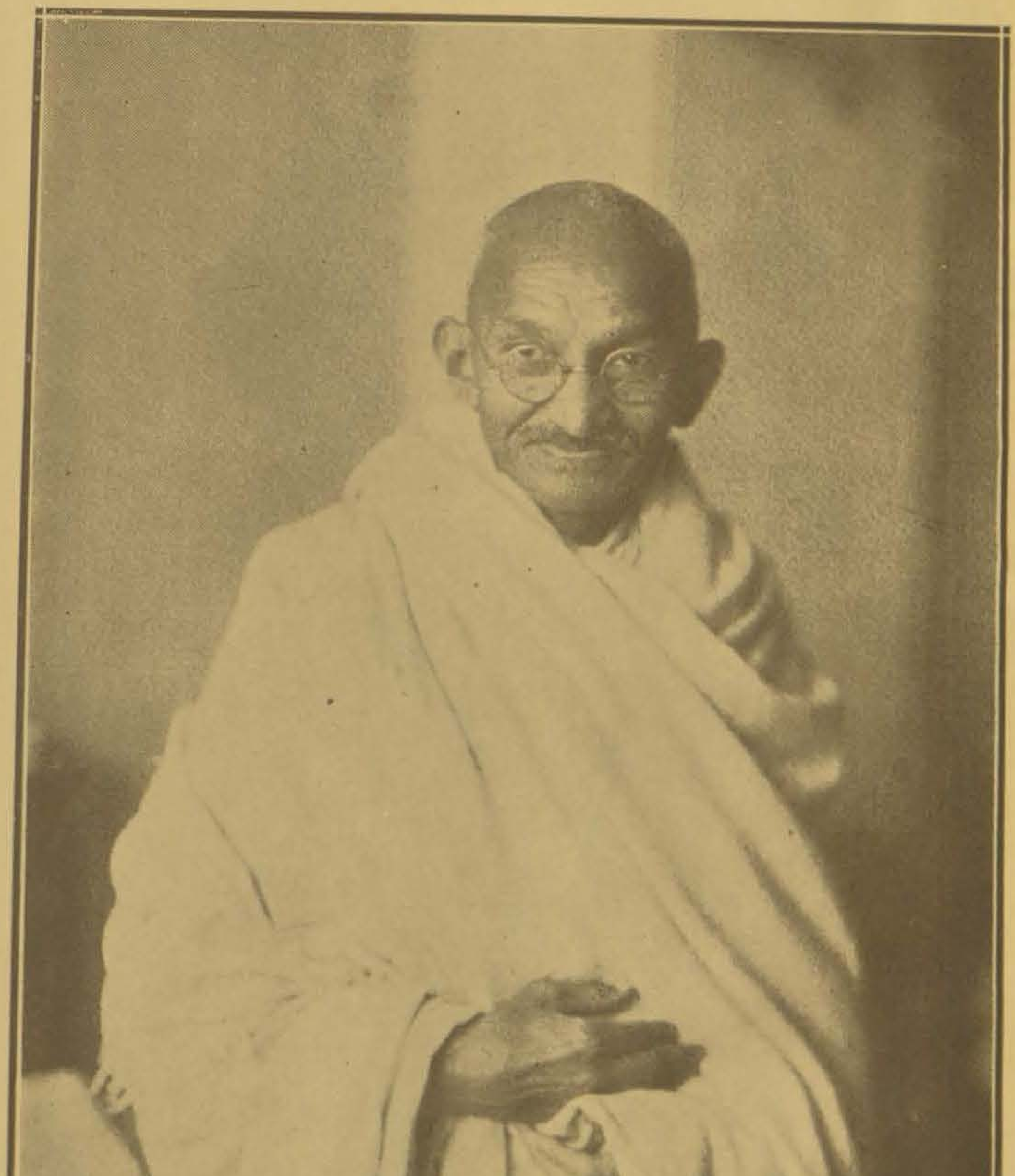


By courtesy

THE NATION'S VOICE

Being a collection of Gandhiji's speeches in England and Sjt. Mahadev Desai's account of the sojourn

[September to December 1931]

Edited by

C. Rajagopalachar

and

J. C. Kumarappa

True, I have come empty-handed but I am thankful I have not compromised the honour of the Country.

AHMEDABAD

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Publisher's Note

In response to repeated requests from the public, we have pleasure in placing before them a convenient collection of Gandhiji's speeches in England and Sjt. Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's activities while there. These have appeared in the columns of *Young India* from time to time.

We much regret that owing to the pressure under which we have had to bring out this volume a few errors have crept in, but we hope that the readers will extend to us their indulgence for our shortcomings.

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PART I

I

THE NATIONAL DEMAND

I MUST confess at the outset that I am not a little embarrassed in having to state before you the position of the Indian National Congress. I would like to say that I have come to London to attend this sub-committee, as also the Round Table Conference, when the proper time comes, absolutely in the spirit of co-operation and to strive to my utmost to find points of agreement. I would like also to give this assurance to His Majesty's Government, that at no stage is it, or will it be, my desire to embarrass authority; and I would like to give the same assurance to my colleagues here, that however much we may differ about our view points, I shall not obstruct them in any shape or form. Therefore, my position here depends entirely upon your goodwill, as also the goodwill of His Majesty's Government. If at any time, I found that I could not be of any useful service to the Conference, I would not hesitate to withdraw myself from it. I can also say to those who are responsible for the management of this Committee and the Conference that they have only to give a sign and I should have no hesitation in withdrawing.

I am obliged to make these remarks because I know that there are fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress, and it is possible that there are vital differences between my colleagues and myself. There is also a limitation under which I shall be working. I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress; and it might be as well to remind ourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is. You will then extend your sympathy to me, because I know that the burden that rests upon my shoulders is really very great.

What the Congress is

THE CONGRESS is, if I am not mistaken, the oldest political organisation we have in India. It has had nearly 50 years of life, during which period it has, without any interruption, held its annual session. It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain. Allan Octavius Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsees, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognise as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Musalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians, I might say all religions, sects, and communities represented upon it more or less fully. The late Badruddin Tyebji identified himself with the Congress. We have had Musalmans and Parsees as presidents of the Congress. I can recall at least one Indian Christian president at the present moment, W. C. Bonnerji.

Kalicharan Bannerji, than whom I have not had the privilege of knowing a purer Indian, was also thoroughly identified with the Congress. I miss, as I have no doubt all of you miss, the presence in our midst of Mr. K. T. Paul. Although he never officially belonged to the Congress, he was a nationalist to the full and a sympathiser of the Congress.

As you know, the late Maulana Muhammed Ali, whose presence also we miss today, was a president of the Congress, and, at present, we have four Musalmans as members of the Working Committee, which consists of 15 members. We have had women as our presidents, Dr. Annie Besant was the first, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu followed. We have her as a member of the Working Committee also; and so, if we have no distinctions of class or creed, we have no distinctions of sex either.

The Congress has, from its very commencement, taken up the cause of the so-called "untouchables". There was a time when the Congress had at every annual session as its adjunct the Social Conference, to which the late Ranade had dedicated his energies, among his many activities. Headed by him, you will find in the programme of the Social Conference, reform in connection with the untouchables taking a prominent place. But in 1920, the Congress took a large step and brought the question of removal of untouchability as a plank on the political platform, made it an important item of the political programme. Just as the Congress considered Hindu-Muslim unity, thereby meaning unity amongst the people following all the great religions, to be indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj, so also did the Congress consider the removal of untouchability as an indispensable condition for the attainment of full freedom.

The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains intact today and so, you will see that the Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it has described itself to be, namely, 'national' in every sense of the term.

If Your Highnesses will permit me to say it, in the very early stages, the Congress took up your cause also. Let me remind this Committee that it was the Grand Old Man of India who sponsored the cause of Kashmir and Mysore, and these two great Houses, I venture, in all humility, to submit, owe not a little to the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji and the Congress. Even now the Congress has endeavoured to serve the Princes of India by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs.

I hope that this brief introduction that I thought fit to give will serve to enable the sub-committee and those who are interested in the claims of the Congress, to understand that it has endeavoured to deserve the claim that it has made. It has failed, I know, often to live up to the claim, but, I venture to submit, that if you were to examine the history of the Congress, you would find that it has more often succeeded, and progressively succeeded, than failed. Above all, the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb, semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its seven hundred thousand villages, no matter whether they come from what is called British India, or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions. You do find now and again an apparent clash between several interests. If there is a genuine and real clash, I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will sacrifice every

interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions. It is, therefore, essentially a peasant organisation, or, it is becoming so progressively. You, and even the Indian members of the sub-committee, will, perhaps, be astonished to find that today the Congress, through its organisation, the All-India Spinners' Association, is finding work for nearly 50,000* women in nearly 2,000 villages, and these women, are possibly 50 per cent Musalman women. Thousands of them belong to the so-called untouchable classes. We have thus, in this constructive manner, penetrated these villages and the effort is being made to cover every one of the 7,00,000 villages. It is a superhuman task, but if human effort can do so, you will presently find the Congress covering all of these villages and bringing to them the message of the spinning wheel.

The Congress Demand

THIS BEING the representative character of the Congress, you will not be astonished when I read to you the Congress mandate. I hope that it may not jar upon you. You may consider that the Congress is making a claim which is wholly untenable. Such as it is, I am here to put forth that claim on behalf of the Congress in the gentlest manner possible, but also in the firmest manner possible. I have come here to prosecute that claim with all the faith and energy that I can command. If you can convince me to the contrary and show that the claim is inimical to the interests of these dumb millions, I shall revise my opinion. I am open to conviction, but even so, I should have to ask my principals to consent to that revision before I could

*The latest figures of the Spinners' Association show 1,80,000 spinners.

usefully act as the agent of the Congress. At this stage, I propose to read to you this mandate so that you can understand clearly the limitations imposed upon me.

This was a resolution passed at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress:

> "This Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj, meaning complete independence, remains intact. In the event of a way remaining otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this goal, and in particular so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have a scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right for either party to end the partnership at will: provided, however, that the Congress delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India."

Then follows the appointment. I have in the light of this mandate endeavoured to study as carefully as I was capable of studying the provisional conclusions arrived at by the several sub-committees appointed by the Round Table Conference. I have also carefully studied the Prime Minister's statement giving the considered policy of His Majesty's Government. I speak subject to correction, but so far as I have been able to understand, this document falls short of what

is aimed at and claimed by the Congress. True, I have the liberty to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably in the interests of India, but they have all to be consistent with the fundamentals stated in this mandate.

I remind myself at this stage of the terms of what is to me a sacred Settlement, the Settlement arrived at Delhi between the Government of India and the Congress. In that settlement, the Congress has accepted the principle of federation; the principle that there should be responsibility at the centre, and has accepted also the principle that there should be safeguards in so far as they may be necessary in the interests of India.

Equal partnership

THERE WAS one phrase used yesterday, I forget by which delegate, but it struck me very forcibly. He said, "we do not want a merely political constitution." I do not know that he gave that expression the same meaning that it immediately bore to me: but I immediately said to myself, this phrase has given me a good expression. It is true the Congress will not be, and personally speaking, I myself would never be, satisfied with a mere political constitution which to read would seem to give India all she can possibly politically desire, but in reality would give her nothing. If we are intent upon complete independence it is not from any sense of arrogance; it is not because we want to parade before the universe that we have now severed all connection with the British people. Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, you find in this mandate itself that the Congress contemplates a partnership; the Congress contemplates a connection with the British people, but that

connection should be such as can exist between two absolute equals. Time was when I prided myself on being, and being called, a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject: I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject; but I have now aspired, I still aspire, to be a citizen not in the Empire, but in a Commonwealth, in a partnership if possible; if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership, but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence, you find here that the Congress claims that either party should have the right to sever this connection, to dissolve the partnership. It has got to be, necessarily therefore, of mutual benefit. May I say—it may be irrelevant to the consideration, but not irrelevant to me,—that as I have said elsewhere, I can quite understand responsible British statesmen today being wholly engrossed in domestic affairs, in trying to make both ends meet. We could not expect them to do anything less, and I felt, even as I was sailing towards London, whether we, in the sub-committee at the present moment, would not be a drag upon the British ministers, whether we would not be interlopers. And yet, I said to myself, it is possible that we might not be interlopers, it is possible that the British ministers themselves might consider the proceedings of the Round Table Conference to be of primary importance even in terms of their domestic affairs. Yes, India can be held by the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain, and the economic freedom of Great Britain: an enslaved but a rebellious India, or an India, an esteemed partner with Britain to share her sorrows, to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes?

YES, IF NEED BE, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain, not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world.

My dream

If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth, or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom. And so I said to myself, whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful island that, perchance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that India as a valuable partner, not held by force but by the silken cord of love, an India of that character might be conceivably of real assistance to you in balancing your budget, not for one year but for many years. What cannot the two nations do—one a handful but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unsurpassed, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number to protect the weak—and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islam and Hindu cultures and if you will, also containing not a small but a very large Christian population, and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers almost beneath contempt, but in philanthropy and enterprise almost unequalled, certainly unsurpassed. We have got all these cultures concentrated in India, and supposing that God fires both Hindus and

Musalmans represented here with a proper spirit so that they close ranks and come to an honourable understanding, take that nation and this nation together, I again ask myself and ask you whether with an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, an honourable partnership between these two nations cannot be mutually beneficial; even in terms of the domestic affair of this great nation. And so, in that dreamy hope I have approached the British Isles, and I shall still cherish that dream.

And when I have said this perhaps I have said all, and you will be able to dot the I's, and cross the T's, not expecting me to fill in all the details, and tell you what I mean by control over the army, what I mean by control over external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, or even the financial transactions which a friend yesterday considered to be sacrosanct. I do not take that view. If there is a stock-taking between incoming and outgoing partners, their transactions are subject to audit and adjustment, and the Congress will not be guilty of any dishonourable conduct or crime in saying that the nation should understand what it is taking over and what it should not take over. This audit, this scrutiny, is asked for not merely in the interests of India; it is asked for in the interests of both. I am positive that the British people do not want to saddle upon India a single burden which it should not legitimately bear, and I am here to declare on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will never think of repudiating a single claim or a burden that it should justly discharge. If we are to live as an honourable nation worthy of commanding credit from the whole world, we will pay every farthing of legitimate debt with our blood.

I do not think I should take you any further through the clauses of this mandate and analyse for you the meaning of these clauses as Congressmen give them. If it is God's will that I should continue to take part in these deliberations, as the deliberations proceed, I shall be able to explain the implications of these clauses. As the deliberations proceed I would have my say in connection with the safeguards also. But, I think, I have said quite enough in having, with some elaboration and with your generous indulgence, Lord Chancellor, taken the time of this meeting. I had not intended really to take that time but I felt that I could not possibly do justice to the cause I have come to expound to you, the sub-Committee, and to the British Nation of which we the Indian delegation are at present, the guests, if I did not give you, out of the whole of my heart, my cherised wish even at this time. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India.

I cannot do anything more than say that it will be my fervent prayer during all the days that I live in your midst that this consummation may be reached. I thank you, Lord Chancellor, for the courtesy that you have extended to me in not stopping me, although I have taken close upon fortyfive minutes. I was not entitled to all that indulgence and I thank you once more.

II

THE LEGISLATURES

A Complaint

LORD CHANCELLOR, it is not without very great hesitation that I take part in this debate and before I proceed to deal with the several points that are noted down here for discussion I should like, with your permission, to disburden myself of an oppressive feeling that has been growing on me ever since Monday. I have watched with the greatest attention the discussions that have taken place in this Committee. I have endeavoured to study, as I have not done before, the list of the delegates, and the first feeling of oppression that has been coming upon me is that we are not the chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing, but we are the chosen ones of the Government. I see, as I study the list, and as I know the different parties and groups in India from experience, some very noticeable gaps also; and so I am oppressed with a sense of unreality in connection with our composition.

My second reason for feeling a sense of unreality is that these proceedings seem to me to be interminable

and to be leading us practically nowhere. If we go on at this rate I do not know that we shall proceed beyond having discussed the verious points raised before this sub-Committee threadbare.

I would, therefore, first of all, Lord Chancellor, tender my deepest sympathies to you for the very great patience, and may I add the unfailing courtesy, with which you are handling us, and I really congratulate you upon the great pains that you are taking over the proceedings of this sub-Committee. I hope however, that at the end of your task and of our task it will be possible for me to tender my congratulations on having enabled us, or even compelled us, to show some tangible result.

May I here lodge a gentle, humble complaint against His Majesty's advisers. Having brought us together from over the seas, and knowing, as I take it they do know, that we are all of us, without exception, busy people, as they themselves are, and that we have left our respective posts of duties, having brought us together is it not possible for them to give us a lead? Can I not, through you, appeal to them to let us know their mind? I should be delighted, and I feel that would be the proper procedure too, if I may venture to say so in your presence, if they would bring forward concrete proposals for taking our opinion. If some such thing was done I have no doubt that we should be able to come to some conclusions, good or bad, satisfactory or unsatisfactory; but, if we simply resolve ourselves into a debating society, each member of which gives an eloquent discourse upon the points severally raised, I do not think that we shall be serving or advancing the purpose for which we have been brought together.

It seems to me that it might be profitable, if it is open for you, to appoint a sub-committee to give you some points for conclusion so that our proceedings may be terminated in fair time. I have simply ventured to throw out these suggestions for your consideration, and for the consideration of the members. Perhaps you will kindly bring them to the notice of His Majesty's advisers for their consideration.

I do want them to guide us and to give us a lead, and to place their own cards on the table. I want them to say what they would do supposing that we appointed them as the arbiters of our destiny. If they would be good enough to seek our advice and opinion, then we should give them our advice and opinion. That would be in my opinion really a better thing than this state of hopeless uncertainty and endless delay.

Having said that, I shall venture to offer a few remarks upon 'head 2.' There I share the difficulty that faced Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. If I understood him rightly, he said that he was embarrassed in that he was called upon to deal with several sub-heads when he did not know what the franchise actually would be. There is this difficulty that I share with him, but there is an additional difficulty that stares me in the face. I placed before the Committee the mandate of the Congress, and I have to discuss every one of the sub-heads in terms of that mandate. Therefore, on some of these sub-heads I would have to offer suggestions or my opinion in terms of that mandate, and if the Committee does not know what it is sailing for, naturally, the opinion that I may offer would be really of no value to the Committee. The opinion would be of value only in terms of that mandate. My meaning will be clear when I come to examine those sub-heads.

The States

WITH REFERENCE to sub-head (i), whilst my sympathies, broadly speeking, are with Dr. Ambedkar, my reason is wholly with Mr. Gavin Jones and Sir Sultan Ahmed; If we were a homogenous sub-committee, whose members were entitled to vote and come to a conclusion, I should then sail a very long distance with Dr. Ambedkar, but such is not our position. We are an ill-assorted group, each member of which is perfectly independent, and is entitled to give his or her views. In that state we have no right, in my humble opinion, to say to the States what they shall do and what they shall not do. Those States have very generously come to our assistance and said that they would federate with us, and perhaps part with some of their rights which they might otherwise have held exclusively. In that condition, I could not but endorse the opinion given by Sir Sultan Ahmed, which was perhaps emphasised by Mr. Gavin Jones, that the utmost that we can do is to plead with the States, and show them our own difficulties; but at the same time I feel that we have to recognise their special difficulties also.

Therefore, I can only venture a suggestion or two to the great Princes for their sympathetic consideration, and I would urge this, being a man of the people, from the people, and endeavouring to represent the lowest classes of society—I would urge upon them the advisability of finding a place for themselves also in any scheme that they may evolve and present for the acceptance of this sub-Committee. I feel, and I know, that they have the interests of their subjects at heart. I know that they claim, jealously to guard their interests, but they will, if all goes well, more and more come in conact with popular India, if

I may so call British India, and they will want to make common cause with the inhabitants of that India, as the people of that India would want to make common cause with the India of the Princes. After all, there is no vital, real division between these two Indias. If one can divide a living body into two parts you may divide India into two parts. It has lived as one country from time immemorial, and no artificial boundary can possibly divide it. The Princes, be it said to their credit, when they declared themselves frankly and courageously in favour of Federation, claimed also to be of the same blood with us, our own kith and kin. How could they do otherwise? There is no difference between them and us except that we are common people and they are, God has made them, noblemen, princes. I wish them well; I wish them all prosperity, and I also pray that their prosperity and their welfare may be utilised for the advancement of their own dear people, their own subjects.

Beyond this I will not go, I cannot go, I can only make an appeal to them. It is open to them, as we know, either to come into the Federation or not to come into it. It is up to us to make it easy for them to come into the Federation. It is up to them to make it easy for us to welcome them with open arms.

Without that spirit of give and take I know that we shall not be able to come to any definite scheme of Federation, or, if we do, we shall ultimately quarrel and break up. Therefore, I would rather that we did not embark upon any federal scheme than that we should do so without our full hearts in the thing. If we do so, we should do so whole-heartedly.

Voters' Qualification

THEN, WITH reference to the second head, on the question whether there should be any disqualification or not, Although I claim to be a full-fledged democrat, I have no hesitation in saying that it is entirely consistent with the rights of the voter to have some disqualifications attaching to candidature as also some disqualifications which would unseat a member. What they should be I do not wish to go into at the present moment; I simply say that I would endorse whole-heartedly the idea and the principle of disqualification.

The words 'moral turpitude' do not frighten me. On the contrary, I think they are good words. Of course any words that we may chose with the greatest deliberation will still cause difficulty, but what are judges for if they are not there to surmount those difficulties? In case of difficulty, judges will come to our assistance and will say what comes under the term 'moral turpitude' and what does not; and if, perchance, a person like myself, offering civil resistance, was considered guilty of 'moral turpitude' I will take that. I do not mind being disqualified. Some other people might have to suffer hardship also, but on that account I am not disposed to say that there shall be no disqualifications whatsoever, and that, if there were any, it would be an encroachment upon the right of the voter. If we are to have some test or some age limit, I think, we should have some character limit as well.

Indirect Elections

THEN THE THIRD point is as to indirect and direct election. I wish Lord Peel were here to find me in substantial agreement with him so far as the principle of indirect election is concerned. I do not know, I am talking simply as a layman, but the words

'indirect election' do not frighten me. I do not know, if they have any technical meaning; if they have, I am wholy unaware of it. I shall say what I myself mean. If that is also called 'indirect election' I would certainly go round and plead for it, and probably get a large body of public opinion in favour of that method of election. I am wedded to adult suffrage, Somehow or other, Congressmen swear by it. Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one, and one of the decisive reasons to me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Musalmans, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes.

I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got wealth should have the vote but that a man who has got character but no wealth or literacy should have no vote, or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote, for the crime of being a poor man. It is an unbearable thing, and having lived and mixed with the poorest of the villagers, and having prided myself on being considered an untouchable, I know that some of the finest specimens of humanity are to be found amongst these poor people, amongst the very untouchables themselves. I would far rather forego the right of voting myself, than that this untouchable brother should not have the vote.

Literacy

I AM NOT enamoured of the doctrine of literacy, that a voter must at least have a knowledge of the three R's. I want for my people a knowledge of the three R's but I know also that if I have to wait until they have got a knowledge of the three R's before

they can be qualified for voting I shall have to wait until the Greek Kalends, and I am not prepared to wait all that time. I know millions of these men are quite capable of voting, but if we are going to give them the vote, it will become very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to bring them all on the voters' list and have manageable constituencies.

I do share Lord Peel's fear that if we have unwieldy constituencies it is not possible for the candidate to come in personal touch with all this multitude of people or to keep touch with them from time to time and to take their opinon and so on. Although I have never aspired to legislative honours I have had something to do with these electorates and I know how difficult it has been. I also know the experiences of those who have been members of these legislative bodies.

We, in the Congress, therefore, have evolved a scheme, and though the Government of the day have accused us of insolently setting up a parallel Government, I would like to subscribe to that charge in my own fashion. Though we have not set up any parallel Government, we certainly aspire some day or other to displace the existing Government and in due course, in the course of evolution, to take charge also of that Government.

Having been for the last fourteen years a draftsman of the Indian National Congress, and having been for nearly twenty years draftsman for a similar body in South Africa, you will allow me to share my experience with you. In the Congress constitution we have practically adult suffrage. We impose a nominal fee of 4 annas a year. I would not mind imposing that fee even here. I again share Lord Peel's fear that in our poor country we run the risk of having to spend a lot

of money merely upon managing our elections. I would avoid that, and therefore I would even collect this money. I am open to conviction that even 4 annas would be a grave burden, in which case I would waive it; but in any case in the Congress organisation we have that.

We have also another distinguishing feature, So far as I know the working of voting systems, the registration officer has to put on the voters' list all those who, he considers, are entitled to the vote, and hence, whether a man wishes to vote or not, whether he wants his name to come on the list or not, he finds his name there. On one fine morning I found my name on the voters' list in Durban in Natal. I had no intention of affecting the legislative position there and I never cared to place my name on the roll of voters, but when some candidate wanted my vote for himself he drew my attention to the fact that I was on the voters' list; and since then I have known that that is how voters' lists are prepared.

We have this alternative, that he who wants to vote can have the vote. It is, therefore, open to those who want to vote to do so, and subject to the condition regarding age and any other condition which may be applicable to all, it will be open to many millions to have their names without distinction of sex on the voters' list. I think a scheme of that character would keep the voters' list in a manageable compass.

EVEN SO WE would have millions, and something is needed to link the village with the Central Legislature.

Electoral Organisation

We have something analogous to the Central Legislature in the Indian Congress Committee. We have also provincial bodies analogous to the provincial

legislatures, and we have also our own tin-pot legislation and we have also our administration. We have got our own Executive. It is perfectly true we have no bayonets to back it, but we have something infinitely superior to back our decisions and to get our people to conform to these decisions, and we have hitherto not found insurmountable difficulties. I do not say that we have been able always to exact obedience fully in all circumstances, but we have been able to scrape through all these 47 years and year after year this Congress has grown from height to height.

Let me tell you that our provincial councils have got full authority to frame bye-laws in order to govern their elections. The corner stone, namely, the qualifications for voters, they cannot change at all, but all other things they can have in their own way.

Therefore, I will take only one province where this thing is done. The villages elect their own little committees. These committees elect the taluka committees (taluka is a sub-district) and these taluka committees again elect the district council, and the district councils elect provincial councils. The provincial councils send their members to the Central legislature, if I may so dub this All-India Congress Committee. That is how we have been able to do it. Whether in this scheme we may do this or may do something else, I do not mind, but I have certainly visualised that we have 700,000 villages. I believe that the 700,000 includes the villages in Princes' India also. Then we have 500,000 or a little more in popular India. We would have these 500,000 units, each to elect its own representative, and these representatives will be the electorate that would elect, if you will, representatives to the Central or the

Federal Legialature. I have simply given you an outline of the scheme. It can be filled in if it commends itself to your attention. If we are going to have adult suffrage I am afraid that we shall have to fall back upon a scheme somewhat after the style that I have suggested to you. Wherever it has been working I can only give you my evidence that it has worked with excellent results, and there has been no difficulty in establishing contact through these respective representatives with the humblest villager. The machinery has worked smoothly, and, where people have worked it honestly, it has worked expeditiously, and certainly without any expense worth naming. Under this scheme I cannot conceive the possibility of a candidate having to spend Rs. 60,000 over an election, or even one lakh. I know of some cases in which the expenses have run to one lakh of rupees, in my opinion, an atrocious figure for the poorest country in the world.

Bicameral Legislature

WHILST I AM upon this, I would like to give you my opinion, for what it may be worth, in connection with bicameral legislatures. I find myself, if it would not offend your susceptibities, in Mr. Joshi's company. I am certainly not enamoured or I do not swear by two legislatures. I have no fear of a popular legislature running away with itself and hastily passing some laws of which afterwards it will have to repent. I would not like to give a bad name to it and then hang the popular legislature. I think that a popular legislature can take care of itself, and, since we are dealing with the poorest country in the world, the less expenses we have to bear the better it is for us. I do not for one moment endrose the idea

that unless we have an Upper Chamber to exercise some control over the popular chamber the popular chamber will ruin the country. I have no such fear but I can visualise a state of affairs when there can be a battle royal between the popular chamber and the Upper Chamber. Anyway, whilst I would not take up a decisive attitude in connection with it, personally I am firmly of opinion that we can do with one Chamber only and that we can do with it to great advantage. We will certainly save a great deal of expense if we can bring ourselves to believe that we shall do with one Chamber. I find myself in agreement wholeheartedly with Lord Peel that we need not worry ourselves about precedents. We shall set a new precedent ourselves. After all we are a continent. There is no such thing as absolute similarity between any two human living institutions. We have our own peculiar circumstances, and we have our idiosyncrasies. I do feel that we shall have in many ways to strike out a new path for ourselves irrespective of precedents. Therefore, I feel that we would not go wrong if we tried the method of having one Chamber only. Make it as perfect as human ingenuity can, by all means, but be satisfied with only one Chamber. Holding these views, I do not need to say anything about sub-heads (iii) and (iv).

Special Interests

I COME TO sub-head (v), representation by special constituencies of special interests. The Congress has reconciled itself to special treatment of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh tangle. There are sound historical reasons for it, but the Congress will not extend that doctrine in any shape or form. I listened to the list of special interests. So far as the untouchables are concerned, I have not

yet quite grasped what Dr. Ambedkar has to say, but, of course, the Congress will share the onus with Dr. Ambedkar of representing the interests of the untouchables. The interests of the untouchables are as dear to the Congress as the interests of any other body or of any other individual throughout the length and breadth of India. Therefore, I would most strongly resist any further special representation. Under adult suffrage, labour units certainly do not require any special representation; landlords most decidedly not, and I will give you my reason. There is no desire on the part of the Congress, and there is no desire on the part of our dumb paupers, to dispossess landlords of their possessions, but they would have landlords to act as trustees for their tenants. I think that it should be a matter of pride for the landlords to feel that their ryots, the millions living in villages, would prefer them as their candidates and as their representatives than others coming from other parts or some one from among themselves.

What will happen is that the landlords will have to make common cause with the ryots, and what can be nobler, what can be better? But, if the landlords insisted on special treatment and special representation in either Chamber, if there are two Chambers, or in the one popular Chamber, I am afraid that it would be really throwing the apple of discord into our midst, and I am hoping that no such claim will be put forward on behalf of the landlords or any such interest.

Then I come to my friends the Europeans, whom naturally Mr. Gavin Jones claims to represent. I would suggest to him humbly that hitherto they have been

the privi leged class, they have received the protection that this foreign Government could give, and they have received it liberally. If they would now make common cause with the masses of India they need not be afraid, as Mr. Gavin Jones said he was afraid, and he read from some document. I have not read it. It may be that some Indians also may say, 'Oh, yes, if Eurpoeans, Englishmen, want to be elected by us we are not going to elect them,' but I would undertake to take Mr. Gavin Jones throughout the length and breadth of India and show to him that he will be preferred to an Indian if he will make common cause with us. Take Charlie Andrews. I assure you that he will be elected a delegate in any constituency in India without the slightest difficulty. Ask him whether he has not been received throughout the length and breadth of India with open arms. I could multiply the instance. I appeal to the Europeans to try once to live on the good will of the people and not seek to have their interests specially safeguarded or protected, which would be the wrong way to go about the business. If they would live in India I would want them to live, I would beseech them to live, as one of us. In any case, I do feel that in any scheme to which the Congress can be party, there is no room for the protection of special interests. The special interests are automatically protected when you have got adult suffrage.

So far as the Christians are concerned, if I may cite the testimony of one who is no longer with us, I know that he said, "We want no special protection", and I have letters from Christian organisasions saying that they wanted no special protection, and that the special protection that they would get would be by right of humble service.

NOW I COME to a very delicate point—that is, the Oath of Allegiance. I am not able to give any opinion just now, because I want to know what it is to be. If it is to be complete freedom, if it is to be complete independence for India, the Oath of Allegiance, naturally, will be of one character. If it is to be a subject India, then I have no place there. Therefore, it is not possible for me today to give any opinion upon the question of the Oath of Allegiance.

Oath of Allegiance

THEN THE LAST question: what provision, if any, shall be made in each Chamber for nominated members? Well, in the scheme that the Congressmen have adumbrated there is no room for nominated members. I can understand experts coming, or men whose advice might be sought. They would give their advice and they would retire. I cannot see the slightest justification for clothing them with votes. Votes are given only by popular representatives, if we want to have a democratic institution undiluted. Therefore, I cannot possibly endorse a scheme where there are nominated members, but that brings me back to sub-head (v). Supposing I had that in mind—because we have that in the Congress also—that we want women to be elected, we want Europeons to be elected, we certainly want untouchables to be elected, we want Christians to be elected, and I know well enough that these are very large minorities, but still, these are minorities; and supposing that constituencies so misbehave themselves as not to elect women or Europeans or untouchables or, say, landlords, and they do not do so for no

Nominations

reasonable justification whatsoever, I would have, then, a clause in the constitution which would enable this elected legislature to elect or nominate them. But then it would be a method of electing those who should have been but have not been elected. Perhaps, I have not been able to express my meaning clearly, so I will give you an illustration. We have in one Provincial Congress Council exactly a rule of this character. We have asked the constituencies to elect so many women, so many Musalmans, so many untouchables to the council, but if they fail to do so it is done by the elected body, not from among themselves, but from women who might have been candidates or untouchables who might have been candidates or Musalmans who might have been candidates, and thus they will complete the quota. That is what we do. I would not mind, on the contrary, I would welcome, some such saving clause in order that constituencies may not misbehave, but in the first instance, I would trust the constituencies to elect all classes of people and not become clannish or be caste-ridden. The Congress mentality, I may assure you, is wholly and absolutely against caste and against the doctrine of superiority and inferiority. Congress is cultivating a spirit of absolute equality.

I am sorry for having taken so much of your time but I am thankful to the Chairman for having given me this indulgence.*

* A discussion followed this speech:

Sir Akbar Hydari: May I ask one question. With regard to the 500,000 villages or electorates, would they elect first to the Provincial Council and then the Provincial Councils elect to the Federal Legislatures, or would you have separate electorates for the Provincial Councils and the Federal Legislature?

Gandhiji: May I suggest, Sir, in the first instance, in answer to Sir Akbar Hydari, that if we accept the genaral outline of the scheme that I have adumbrated, all these things can really be settled without

the slightest difficulty; but the special question that Sir Akbar has asked I will answer by saying that in the scheme that I was trying to propound, the villages will be electing the electors or the voters: that the village will elect one man, and say "you will exercise the vote for us." He will become their agent for the election either to the Provincial Legislatures or to the Central Legislature.

Sir Akbar Hydari: Then that man would have a dual capacity, to vote in the elections for the Provincial Council as well as to the Central Legislature?

Gandhiji: He can have that, but today I was talking simply of the election to the Central Legislature.

Sir Akbar Hydari: Would you rule out any idea of the Provincial Legislature so elected electing to the Federal Legislature?

Gandhiji: I do not rule it out but that does not commend itself to me. If that is the special meaning of "indirect election," I rule it out. I use the term "indirect election" vaguely. If it has any such technical meaning, I do not know.

III

TWO TESTS

EVER since I came to London I have experienced nothing but friendliness and genuine affection, I have been daily making new friends. But you,* sir, have reminded me that you have been friends in need, and friends in need are friends indeed. When it appeared that India, rather Congressmen, might be abandoned by nearly everybody on earth you stood by the Congress firmly and accepted the Congress position as your own. You have today renewed your faith in the Congress programme and thereby you have lightened my labours.

It would be like carrying coals to Newcastle to deliver to you the message for which I have been sent here as the Congress representative. You know all about the merits of the Congress case and I am convinced that the Congress case is quite safe in your hands and you have by your action today set the seal upon the friendship, through the Congress, of the dumb aud semi-starved millions of India's villages.

It is imagined that you have had a lunch. My sympathies are wholly with you. I am accustomed to English lunches, not through the taste but through the eyes,

* Mr. A. Fenner Brockway

and when I saw this table, I realised what a sacrifice it was for you to take what is an apology for a luncheon. I hope that the spirit of sacrifice will forbear until tea-time comes and you provide yourselves then with any little delicacies that English hotels and restaurants provide for you. But behind this apparent joke, there is also a seriousness. I know that you have sacrificed something. Some of you have sacrificed much for advocating the cause of India's independence—understanding the word 'independence' in its full English sense. But it may be that you will be called upon, if you continue your advocacy of India's cause, to make much larger sacrifices. I entertined no illusions in my mind when I undertook to come here. you heard me say on the first day of my entry into London that one of the most potent causes of my having come to London, was to fulfil a word of honour that I had given to an honourable Englishman. In pursuance of that word, without thinking what the result is likely to be, I am endeavouring to the utmost of my ability, to show to every Englishman and Englishwoman I meet that what the Congress stands for is what is deserved by India, and furthermore, I am endeavouring to show that the Congress is in earnest and I am here to vindicate the honour of the Congress, the honour of India by asking for everything that is included in the Congress Mandate. I have no liberty to diminish anything from the Congress claim, save to the extent that is permissible in that Mandate. I feel that the task is difficult, almost superhuman. There is so much ignorance of the conditions that prevail in India. There is so much ignorance of true history.

A Quaker young friend reminded me when I was about to come to England, that it was no use coming here so long as from childhood you were brought up,

not on truthful history, but upon false history. I see what the Quaker friend said exemplified as I come into contact with Englishmen and Englishwomen. It is terribly difficult, almost impossible, for them to realise that Indians believe that the sum total of the activities of British administration in India has been harmful rather than beneficial to the nation. India might have received many benefits from the British connection. But it is of vital importance to sum up the good and evil and find out how India has fared.

I have two infallible tests; Is it or is it not a fact that India today is the poorest country in the world having millions of people remaining idle for six months of the year?

Is it or is it not a fact that India has been rendered emasculated not merely through compulsory disarmament but also through being denied so many opportunities that members of a free nation are always entitled to?

If you find upon investigation that in these two cases England has failed, I do not say hopelessly, but to a very large extent, is it not time that England revised her policy?

As a friend said, as the late Lokamanya Tilak said repeatedly from thousands of platforms: "Freedom and independence were India's birthright." It is not necessary for me to prove that British rule has been in the end British mis-rule. It is enough for me to state that, misrule or good rule, India is entitled to her independence immediately there is a demand made for it on behalf of her voiceless mililons.

It is no answer to be told that there are some in India who are afraid of the words "freedom" and "independence." There are some of us, I admit, who

are afraid of talking about the freedom of India, if the British protection — so-called — is withdrawn from India. But I assure you that the starving millions and those who have become politically conscious entertain no such fear and they are ready to pay the price for the sake of freedom. There are, however, well-marked limitations so long as the Congress retains her present workers and her faith in her present policy. We do not want the freedom of India, to be bought at the sacrifice of the lives of others, to be achieved by spilling the blood of the rulers. But, if any sacrifice can be made by the nation, by ourselves, to win that freedom, then, you will find that we will not hesitate to give a Ganges full of blood to flow in India in order to obtain the freedom that has been so long delayed. I know, as you, sir, reminded me, that I was not a stranger in your midst but that I was a comrade. I know that I have this absolute assurance that so far as you are concerned and those whom you represent are concerned, you would always stand by us and prove once more to India that you are friends in need and, therefore, friends indeed.

I thank you once more for the great reception you have given to me. I know that it is not an honour done to me. You have done that honour to the principles which, I hope, are as dear to me as to you — if possible dearer — and I hope with your prayers and your assistance I shall never deny the principles that I to-day proclaim.

IV

THE CONGRESS AND THE MINORITIES

PRIME MINISTER and friends, it is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce utter failure on my part to secure an agreed solution of the communal question through informal conversations among and with the representatives of different groups. I apologise to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and the other colleagues for the waste of a precious week. My only consolation lies in the fact that when I accepted the burden of carrying on these talks, I knew that there was not much hope of success, and still more in the fact that I am not aware of having spared any effort to reach a solution.

But, to say that the conversations have, to our utter shame, failed is not to say the whole truth. Causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent; we are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here. Further, you will allow me to say that this was

hardly the time to summon the Minorities Committee. It lacks the sense of reality in that we do not know what it is that we are going to get. If we knew in a definite manner that we are going to get the thing we want, we should hesitate fifty times before we threw it away in a sinful wrangle, as it would be if the getting of it must depend upon the ability of the present delegation to produce an agreed solution of the communal tangle. The solution can be the crown of the Swaraj constitution, not its foundation if only because our differences have hardened,—if they have not arisen,—by reason of the foreign domination. I have not a shadow of a doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.

I, therefore, venture to suggest that the Minorities Committee be adjourned *sine-die* and that the fundamentals of the Constitution be hammered into shape as quickly as may be. Meanwhile, the informal work of discovering a true solution of the communal problem will and must continue; only it must not balk or be allowed to block the progress of Constitution-building. Attention must be diverted from it and concentrated on the main part of the structure.

I hardly need to point out to the Committee that my failure does not mean the end of all hope of arriving at an agreed solution. My failure does not even mean my utter defeat; there is no such word in my dictionary. My confession merely means failure of the special effort for which I presumed to ask for a week's indulgence, which you so generously gave.

I propose to use the failure as a stepping stone to success, and I invite you all to do likewise; but should all effort at agreement fail, even when the Round Table Conference reaches the end of its labours, I would

suggest the addition of a clause to the expected Constitution appointing a judicial tribunal that would examine all claims and give its final decision on all the points that may be left unsettled.

Nor need this Committee think that the time given for enabling informal conversations to be carried on has been altogether wasted. You will be glad to learn that many friends, not members of the delegation, have been giving their attention to the question. Among these I would mention Sir Geoffrey Corbett. He has produced a scheme of redistribution of the Punjab which, though it has not found acceptance, is, in my opinion, well worth studying. I am asking Sir Geoffrey if he will kindly elaborate and circulate it among the members. Our Sikh colleagues have also produced another, which is at least worthy of study. Sir Hubert Carr produced last night an ingenious and novel proposal to set up for the Punjab two Legislatures, the lower to satisfy the Musalman claim and the upper nearly satisfying the Sikh claim. Though I am no believer in a bicameral legislature, I am much attracted by Sir Hubert's proposal, and I would invite him to pursue it further with the same zeal with which, I gratefully admit, he followed and contributed to the informal deliberations.

Lastly, inasmuch as the only reason for my appearance at these deliberations is that I represent the Indian National Congress, I must clearly set forth its position. In spite of appearances to the contrary, especially at the Round Table Conference, the Congress claims to represent the whole nation, and most decidedly the dumb millions, among whom are included the untouchables, as also in a way the more unfortunate and neglected classes known as Backward Races.

Here is the Congress position in a nut shell. I am reading the resolution, of the Congress and of the Working Committee:

"The Congress has, since its inception, set up pure nationalism as its ideal. It has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. The following Lahore resolution was the culminating point in its advance towards nationalism.

"'In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India, communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.'

"Hence the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem, but at this critical juncture in the history of the nation it is felt that the Working Committee should suggest for adoption by the country a solution, though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible, and generally acceptable to the communities concerned. The Working Committee, therefore, after full and free discussion, unanimously passed the following scheme:

"1. (a) The article in the constitution relating to fundamental rights shall include a guarantee to the communties concerned of the protection of their

cultures, languages, scripts, education, profession and practice of religion and religious endowments;

"(*b*) Personal laws shall be protected by specific provisions to be embodied in the constitution.

"(*c*) protection of political and other rights of minority communities in the various Provinces shall be the concern and be within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

"2. The Franchise shall be extended to all adult men and women.

(*Note*: The Working Committee is committed to adult franchise by the resolution of the Karachi Congress and cannot entertain any alternative franchise. In view, however, of misapprehensions in some quarters, the Committee wishes to make it clear that in any event the franchise shall be uniform and so extensive as to reflect on the electoral roll the proportion in the population of every community.)

"3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

"(b) That for the Hindus in Sindh and the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the North West Frontier and Punjab, and for Hindus and Muslims in any province where they are less than 25 per cent of the population, seats shall be reserved in the Federal and Provincial Legislature on the basis of population, with the right to contest additional seats.

"4. Appointments shall be made by non-party public service commissions, which shall prescribe the minimum qualifications and which shall have due regard to the efficiency of the public service as well as to the principle of equal opportunity to all the communities for a fair share in the public services of the country.

"5. In the formation of the Federal and Provincial cabinets the interests of minority communities should be recognised by convention.

"6. The North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan shall have the same form of Government and administration as other provinces.

"7. Sindh shall be constituted into a separate province provided that the people of Sindh are prepared to bear the financial burden of the separated Province.

"8. The future constitution of the country shall be Federal. The residuary powers shall vest in the federating units unless on further examination it is found to be against the best interests of India.

"The Working Committee has adopted the foregoing scheme as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalisms and undiluted nationalism. Whilst on the one hand, the Working Committee hopes that the whole nation will endorse the scheme, on the other, it assures those who take extreme views and cannot adopt it that the Committee will gladly, as it is bound to by the Lahore resolution, accept without reservation any other scheme if it commands the acceptance of all the parties concerned."

That is the Congress resolution.

If, however, a national solution is impossible and the Congress scheme proves unacceptable, I am not precluded from endorsing any other reasonable scheme which may be acceptable to the parties concerned. The Congress position on this question, therefore, is one of greatest possible accommodation. Where it cannot help, it will not obstruct. Needless to say that the Congress will whole heartedly support any scheme of private arbitration. It seems to have been represented

that I am opposed to any representation of the untouchables on the legislatures. This is a travesty of the truth. What I have said and what I must repeat is that I am opposed to their special representation. I am convinced that this can do them no good and may do much harm. But the Congress is wedded to adult franchise. Therefore, millions of them can be placed on the voters' roll. It is impossible to conceive that with untouchability fast disappearing nominees of these voters can be boycotted by the others. But what these people need more than election to the legislatures is protection from social and religious persecution. Custom which is often more powerful than law, has brought them to a degradation of which every thinking Hindu has need to feel ashamed and to do penance. I should, therefore, have the most drastic legislation rendering criminal all the special persecution to which these fellow-countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God the conscience of Hindu has been stirred, and untouchability will soon be a relic of our sinful past.

V

THE SUPREME COURT

LORD Chancellor and fellow Delegates, I feel considerable hesitation in speaking on this subject which has been rendered so highly technical by the course that the discussion has taken; but I feel that I owe a duty to you and a duty to the Congress which I represent. I know that the Congress holds some decided views on the question of the Federal Court, views which, I am afraid, may be very distasteful to a large number of the Delegates here. Whatever they are, seeing that they are held by a responsible body, it is, I suppose, necessary that I should at least present them to you.

I see that the discussions proceed, if not upon utter distrust, upon considerable distrust of ourselves. It is assumed that the National Government will not be able to conduct its affairs in an impartial manner. The communal tangle also is colouring the discussion. The Congress, on the other hand, bases the whole of its policy on trust and on the confidence that when we shall have come into power we shall also come to a sense of our responsibility, and all the communal bias will drop out. But should it prove otherwise, then

too the Congress would run the boldest risks, because, without running risks we shall not be able to come to exercise real responsibillty. So long as we have the mental reservation that we have to rest upon some foreign power for our guidance and for conducting our affairs at a critical juncture, so long, in my opinion, there is no responsibility.

One feels also embarrassed by the fact that we really are trying to discuss this thing without knowing where we shall be. I should give one opinion if Defence was not under the control of the responsible Government, and another opinion if Defence was under our own control. I proceed upon the assumption that if we are to enjoy responsibility in the real sense of the term Defence will be under our control, under National control in every sense of the term. I entirely sympathise with Dr. Ambedkar in the difficulty that he raised. It is all very well to have a judgment of the highest tribunal, but if the writ of that tribunal does not run beyond the confines of its own court, that tribunal will be a laughing-stock of the nation and of the whole world. What is then to be done in connection with that writ? What Mr. Jinnah said, of course, came home—that the military would be there—but it will be the Crown that will run the writ. Then, I would say, let the High Court also, or the Federal Court, be under the Crown. In my opinion, the Supreme Court has to be, if we are responsible, under the responsible Government, and therefore, the process of carrying out the writ has also to be made good by the responsible Government. Personally, I do not share the fears that actuate Dr. Ambedkar, but I think that his objection is a very reasonable objection, and that a court which gives judgments should also have perfect confidence that its judgments

will be respected by those who are affected by its judgment, and hence, I would suggest that the judges should have the power of framing rules in order to regulate matters in connection with those judgments. Naturally the enforcement will not rest with the Court; the enforcement will rest with the executive authority, but the executive authority would have to conform to the rules that might be framed by the Court.

We fancy that this constitution is going to give us every detail in connection with the composition of this Court. I respectfully differ from that view in its entirety. I think that this constitution will give us the framework of the Federal Court, will define the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, but the rest will be left to the Federal Government to evolve. I cannot possibly understand that the constitution is also going to tell us how many years the judges are to serve, or whether they are to resign or retire at the age of 70, or 95, or 90, or 65; I think that these will be matters to be taken up by the Federal Government. Of course, we bring in the Crown at the end of almost every sentence. I must confess that, according to the conception of the Congress, there is no question of the Crown. India is to enjoy complete independence, and if India enjoys complete independence, whoever may be the supreme authority there, that supreme authority will be responsible for the appointment of judges and several other matters which today belong to the Crown.

It is a fundamental belief with the Congress that, whatever course the Constitution takes, there should be our own Privy Council in India. The Privy Council's portals, if it is really to give relief to the poor people in matters of the highest importance, should be open to the poorest people in the land and

I think that is impossible if the Privy Council in England is to decide our fate in matters of the greatest importance. There, too, I would guide ourselves by implicit trust in the ability of our judges to pronounce wise and absolutely impartial decisions. I know that we run very great risks. The Privy Council here is an ancient institution, and an institution which justly commands very great regard and respect; but in spite of all the respect that I have for the Privy Council I cannot bring myself to believe that we also will not be able to have a Privy Council of our own which will command universal esteem. Because England can boast of very fine institutions, I do not think that therefore we must be tied down to those institutions. If we learn anything whatsoever from England, we should learn to erect those institutions ourselves; otherwise there is a poor chance for this nation whose representatives we claim to be. Therefore, I would ask us all to have sufficient trust and confidence in ourselves at the present moment. Our beginning may be very small, but, if we have strong, true and honest hearts to give decisions it does not matter in the slightest degree that we have not got the legal traditions which the judges in England claim.

Widest Jurisdiction

THAT BEING my view, I feel that this Federal Court should be a court of the widest jurisdiction possible, and not decide only cases that arise from the administration of Federal Laws. Federal Laws of course will be there, but it should have the amplest jurisdiction to try all the cases that may come from the four corners of India.

It is, then, a question where the subjects of the Princes will be and where they will come in. Subject

to what the Princes may have to say, I would suggest, with the greatest deference and with equal hesitation, that there will be, I hope at the end of it, if we are going to make something out of this Conference, something which will be common to all India, to all the inhabitants of India, whether they come from the States or whether they come from the rest of India. If there is something in common between all of us, naturally the Supreme Court will be the guardian of the rights that we may consider to be common to all. What those rights should be I am totally unable to say. It is entirely for the Princes to say what they can be and what they cannot be. In view of the fact that they represent here not only their own Houses but have taken on themselves the tremendous responsibility of representing their subjects also at this Conference, I would certainly make a humble but fervent appeal to them that they would of their of own accord come forth with some scheme whereby their subjects also may feel that though they are not directly represented at this table their voices find adequate expression through these noble Princes themselves.

Salaries

SO FAR AS the salary is concerned, you will laugh, naturally, but the Congress believes that it is an impossible thing for us who, in terms of wealth, are a nation of dwarfs, to vie with the British Government, which represent today giants in wealth. India, whose average income is 3d. per day, can ill afford to pay the high salaries that are commanded here. I feel that it is a thing which we will have to unlearn if we are going to have voluntary rule in India. It is all very well so long as the British bayonet is there to squeeze out of these poor people taxes to pay these salaries of

Rs. 10,000 a month, Rs. 5,000 a month, and Rs. 20,000 a month. I do not consider that my country has sunk so low that it will not be able to produce sufficient men who will live somewhat in correspondence with the lives of the millions and still serve India nobly, truly and well. I do not believe for one moment that legal talent has to be bought if it is to remain honest.

I recall the names of Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Manomohan Ghosh, Badrudin Tyabji and a host of others, who gave their legal talent absolutely free of charge and served their country faithfully and well. The taunt may be flung in my face that they did so because they were able to charge princely fees in their own professional work. I reject that argument, for the simple reason that I have known everyone of them with the exception of Manomohan Ghosh. It was not that they had plenty of money and therefore gave freely of their talent when India required it. I have seen them living the life of poor people and in perfect contentment. Whatever may be the position at the present moment, I can point out to you several lawyers of distinction who, if they had not come to the national cause, would today be occupying seats of the High Court benches in all parts of India. I have, therefore, absolute confidence that when we come to frame our own rules and so on we will do so in a patriotic spirit and taking account of the miserable state that the millions of India occupy.

One word more and I have finished. Seeing that the Congress holds the view that this Federal Court or Supreme Court—whichever you call it—will occupy the position of the highest tribunal beyond which no man who is an inhabitant of India can go, its

jurisdiction, in my opinion, will be limitless. It will have jurisdiction, so far as Federal matters are concerned, to the extent that the Princes are also willing, but I cannot possibly imagine that we shall have two Supreme Courts, one in order to deal with merely Federal law and another to deal with all the other matters that are not covered by the Federal administration or the Federal Government.

As things go, the Federal Government may concern itself with the minimum of subjects; and therefore matters of the highest moment will be extra-Federal. Who is to adjudicate upon these extra-Federal matters if not this very Supreme Court? Therefore this Supreme Court or Federal Court will exercise double jurisdiction, if necessary treble jurisdiction. The greater the power that we give to this Federal Court, I think, the greater the confidence we shall be able to inspire in the world and also in the nation itself.

I am sorry to have taken up these precious minutes of the time of the Conference, but I felt that, in spite of my great reluctance to speak to you on this question of a Federal Court, I must give you the views that many of us in the Congress have been holding for a long time and which, we would, if we could, spread throughout the length and breadth of India. I know the terrible handicap under which I am labouring. All the most distinguished lawyers are arrayed against me; the Princes also are probably arrayed against me so far as the salaries and jurisdiction of this Court are concerned. But I would be guilty of neglect of duty to the Congress and to you if I did not give you the views that the Congress and I hold so strongly on the matter of the Federal Court.

VI

NEGATION OF DEMOCRACY

PRIME MINISTER, and fellow delegates, it is not without very considerable hesitation and shame that I take part in the discussion on the Minorites question. I have not been able to read with the care and attention that it deserves, the memorandum sent to the delegates on behalf of certain Minorities and received this morning. Before I offer a few remarks on that memorandum, with your permission and with all the deference and respect that are your due, I would express my dissent from the view that you put before this Committee, that the inability to solve the communal question was hampering the progress of Constitution-building, and that it was an indispensable condition prior to the building of any such constitution. I expressed at an early stage of the sittings of this Committee that I did not share that view. The experience that I have since gained has confirmed me in that view and, if you will pardon me for saying so, it was because of the emphasis that was laid last year and repeated this year upon this difficulty, that the different communities

The Main Purpose

were encouraged to press with all the vehemence at their command their own respective views. It would have been against human nature if they had done otherwise. All of them thought that this was the time to press forward their claims for all they were worth, and I venture to suggest again that this very emphasis has defeated the purpose which I have no doubt it had in view. This is the reason why we have failed to arrive at an agreement. I, therefore, associate myself entirely with the view expressed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, that it is not this question which is the fulcrum, it is not this question which is the central fact, but the central fact is the Constitution-building.

I am quite certain that you did not convene this Round Table Conference and bring us all 6,000 miles away from homes and occupations to settle the communal question, but you convened us, you made deliberate declarations that we were invited to come here, to share the process of Constitution-building. You declared that before we went away from your hospitable shores, we should have the certain conviction that we had built up an honourable and a respectable framework for the freedom of India, and that it awaited only the *imprimatur* of the approval of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Now, at the present moment, we are face to face with a wholly different situation, namely, that, because there is no communal settlement agreed to by us, there is to be no building of the Constitution, and that, as the last resort and as the last touch, you will announce the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the Constitution and all the matters that may arise from it. I cannot help feeling that it would be a sorry ending to a Conference which was

brought into being with so much trumpeting and with so much hope excited in the minds and in the breasts of many people.

Coming to this document,* I accept the thanks that have been given to me by Sir Hubert Carr. Had it not been for the remarks that I made when I shouldered that burden, and had not it been for my utter failure to bring about a solution, Sir Hubert Carr rightly says he would not have found the very admirable solution that he has been able, in common with the other Minorities, to present to this Committee for consideration and finally for the consideration and approval of His Majesty's Government.

I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but, in my opinion, what they have done is to sit by the carcase, and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcase.

As representing the predominant political organisation in India, I have no hesitation in saying to His Majesty's Government and to those friends who seek to represent the Minorities mentioned against their names, and indeed to the whole world, that this scheme is not one designed to achieve responsible Government, though undoubtedly, it is designed to share power with the bureaucracy.

If that is the intention — and it is the intention running through the whole of that document — I wish them well, and Congress is entirely out of it. The Congress will wander, no matter how many years, in

* The so-called agreed scheme between the smaller Minorities and the Musalmans. Sir H. Carr in his speech sarcastically thanked Gandhiji's failure to bring about a solution of the Minorities question, which, he said, had resulted in bringing the Minorities together.

the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible Government can never grow.

I am astonished that Sir Hubert Carr should tell us that they have evolved a scheme which, being designed only for a temporary period, would not damage the cause of nationalism, but at the end of ten years we would all find ourselves hugging one another and throwing ourselves into one another's laps. My political experience teaches me a wholly different lesson. If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices, the nation should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it; it is a strain which no national government can possibly bear.

There is the coping stone to this structure, and I am surprised, Mr. Prime Minister, that you allowed yourself to mention this as if it were an indisputable fact, namely, that the proposals may be taken as being acceptable to well over 115 millions of people, or about 46 per cent of the population of India. You had a striking demonstration of the inaccuracy of this figure. You have had, on behalf of the women, a complete repudiation of special representation, and as they happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent is somewhat reduced. But not only that: the Congress may not be a very powerful organisation, but I have not hesitated to make the claim, and I am not ashamed to repeat the claim, that the Congress claims to represent 85 per cent or 95 per cent of the population not merely of British India but of the whole of India. Subject to all the questions that may be raised, I repeat the claim with all the emphasis at my command that the Congress, by right of service, claims to represent that

population which is called the agricultural population of India. I would accept the challenge, if the Government were to issue the challenge, that we should have a referendum in India and you would immediately find whether the Congress does not represent them. But I go a step further. At the present moment, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented there, and represents on its register, a very large number of Musalmans. Several thousand Musalmans went to gaol last year under the banner of the Congress. The Congress today has several thousand Musalmans on its register. The Congress has thousands of untouchables on its register. The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress register. With all deference to the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari, even landlords and even Mill-owners and millionaires are represented there. I admit that they are coming to the Congress slowly, cautiously, but the Congress is trying to serve them also. The Congress undoubtedly represents labour. Therefore, this claim that the proposals set forth in this memorandum are acceptable to well over 115,000,000 of people needs to be taken with a very great deal of reservation and caution.

One word more and I shall have done. You have had presented to you and circulated to the members, I hope, the Congress proposal in connection with the communal problem. I venture to submit that of all the schemes that I have seen, it is the most workable scheme, but I may be in error there. I admit that it has not commended itself to the representatives of the communities at this table, but it has commended itself to the representatives of these very classes in India. It

is not the creation of the brain, but it is the creation of a committee on which various important parties were represented. You have that scheme on behalf of the Congress; but the Congress has also suggested that there should be an impartial arbitration. Through arbitration all over the world people have adjusted their differences, and the Congress is always willing to accept any decision of an arbitration court. I have myself ventured to suggest that there might be appointed by the Government a judicial tribunal which would examine this case and give its decision. But, if none of these ways are acceptable and this is to be the *sine qua non* of any Constitution-building, then, I say, it will be much better for us that we should remain without so-called Responsible Government than that we should accept this scheme put forward by Sir Hubert Carr and others.

I would like to repeat what I have said before, that, while the Congress will always accept any solution that may be acceptable to the Hindus, the Musalmans and the Sikhs, it will be no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other Minorities. The Congress will always endorse clauses or reservations as to fundamental rights and civil liberty. It will be open to everybody to be placed on the voters' roll and to appeal to the common body of the electorates. In my humble opinion, the scheme gathered by Sir Hubert Carr is the very negation of responsible Government, the very negation of nationalism. Heaven help India if India have representatives elected by these several special, cut up groups. That European, and that European only, who commands the approval of the common electorate, and not that of the mere Europeans, will serve India as a whole. The scheme dooms the Responsible

untouchables, but of orthodox Hinduism, and they are, therefore, pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census untouchables classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in prepetuity, so may Moslems, so may Europeans. Would untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. Therefore, with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar, and for his desire to see the untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability I must say that here is a great error under which he has laboured and perhaps, the bitter experiences he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this but I would be untrue to the cause of untouchables, which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility when I say it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar, when he seeks to speak for the whole of the untouchables in India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind the untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are these two divisions set up in every village. Those who speak of political rights of untouchables do not know India and do not know how Indian society is today constructed. Therefore, I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist this thing I will resist it with my life.

VII

DEFENCE

LORD CHANCELLOR and Fellow Delegates, I know that a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders in having to give the Congress view on this most important question. I have intervened at this stage because I am in one of these November fogs. I do not know whether there will, or will not be a Report upon this discussion. I do not know also whether we are going summarily to close these deliberations or whether they are to be extended. So far as I am concerned, I came here with the intention, if necessary, of wintering in England. Therefore, time is of no consequence, if, perchance, the purpose of the Congress can be obtained through friendly negotiation and consultation. I have been sent here with the deliberate intention of exploring every possible avenue to achieve an honourable settlement, whether by open discussion at this table or by private conferences with Ministers and public men who influence public opinion here, and with all those who are interested in questions vitally

affecting India. I am under obligation not to leave a single stone unturned in order to arrive at a settlement, if only because Congress is wedded to a policy which is known to you all. Congress is intent upon reaching its goal at the earliest possible moment, and holds also very decided views upon all these matters. What is more to the purpose, it is today, or considers itself today, capable of shouldering all the responsibilities that flow from responsible self-government.

That being the case, I thought that I could not possibly allow the discussiou on this most important matter to close without placing, as humbly as I could, and as briefly as I could, the Congress view on the question.

Essence of Responsibility

AS YOU ALL are aware, the Congress case is that there should be complete responsibility transferred to India. That means, and it has been so stated expressly in the Congress resolution, that there should be complete control over Defence and over External Affairs. But it also contemplates adjustments. I feel that we ought not to deceive ourselves, and deceive the world, into thinking that we would be getting responsible government although we may not ask for responsibility in this vital matter. I think that a nation that has no control over her own Defence Forces and over her External Affairs, is hardly a responsible nation. If a nation's Defence is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed. This is what our English teachers have taught us times without number, and therefore, some Englishmen twitted me also

when they heard the talk that we would have responsible Government but we would not have or would not claim control over our own Defence Forces.

I am here very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the Army, over the Defence Forces and over External Affairs. I put in Exfernal Affairs also so as to avoid having to speak on it when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru speaks on that subject.

To this conclusion we have come with thè greatest deliberation. If we do not get this control at the time of embarking upon responsibility because we are not deemed fit for it, I cannot conceive a time when, because we are enjoying responsiblity in other matters, we would be suddenly found fit to control our own Defence Forces.

An Army of Occupation

I WOULD LIKE this Committee, for just a few brief moments, to understand what this Army at the present moment means. This Army, in my opinion, whether it is Indian or whether it is British, is really an Army of Occupation. It does not matter to us that they are Sikhs, or that they are Gurkhas or that they are Pathans or that they are men from Madras or that they are Rajputs; no matter who they are, they are foreigners to me whilst they are in that Army, controlled by an alien government. I cannot speak to them. Soldiers have come to me stealthily, and have been afraid even of speaking to me, beacuse they felt that they might be reported. It is not possible for us ordinarily to go to the places where the soldiers are kept. They are also taught not to regard us as their countrymen. Unlike any other country in the

world, there is absolutely no intercourse between them and the ordinary civil population. This I give as my evidence before this Committee as a man who has endeavoured to come into touch in all parts of Indian life with all those with whom it was possible to do so; and this is not only my own personal experience but it is the experience of hundreds and thousands of Congressmen that there is an absolute wall between them and us.

I am quite aware that, therefore, it is a tremendous thing for us at once to shoulder that responsibility and to have control of this Army, even excluding the British soldiers. That is the unfortunate, unhappy position created for us, I am sorry to have to say, by our rulers. But even so, we must take up the responsibility.

Then there is the British section of the Army. What is the purpose of the British Army? Every Indian child knows that that British Army is there, along with the Indian Army, for the defence of British interests, not alone for avoiding or resisting foreign aggression. I am sorry to have to make these remarks, but that is precisely what I have learned and have experienced, and it would be unjust even to my British friends if I did not give expression to the truth as I have seen it and as I hold it. Thirdly, it is an Army intended to suppress rebellion against British authority.

These, then, are the main functions of that Army, and hence it does not surprise me that Englishmen should take the view they do. If I were an Englishman, and had also the ambition to rule another nation, I would do precisely the same thing. I would take hold of Indians and train them as soldiers, and I would train them to be loyal to me, so loyal

that they would, at my command, shoot anybody I desired them to shoot. Who was it that shot people at Jallianwala Bagh, if it was not their own countrymen ?

The existence of the British troops is also intended to serve the purpose of holding the balance between these different Indian soldiers evenly. It undoubtedly protects, as it must protect, the British officers, and it protects British lives. Again I do not make any complaint, if I should assume the premise that it was right for Great Britain to hold India today and to continue to hold India, no matter under what altered conditions.

A Vital Condition

THAT BEING SO, I have no difficulty in answering the question which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would not face and which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also would not face. Both of them said that, not being experts, they were not able to say to what extent this Army could be or should be reduced. I, however, have no such difficulty. I have no difficulty in saying what should happen to this Army. I would say emphatically that before I could possibly shoulder the burden of running the government of India under the terrible handicaps under which we are labouring as a legacy of alien rule, the whole of this Army should be disbanded if it does not pass under my control.

This being my fundamental position, I would say that if you, British ministers and British people, really wish well by India, if you will transfer power now to us, then, regard this as a vital condition that the Army should pass under our control in its entirety.

BUT, THEN, I have told you that I know the risk that is attendant upon it. The Army will not accept my command. I know that very well. I know that the British Commander-in-Chief will not accept my command; nor would the Sikhs, nor the proud Rajputs,—none of them would willingly accept my command. But even so, I expect to exercise that command, with the good-will of the British people. They will be there at the time of transferring the command to teach a new lesson to these very soldiers, and to tell them that they are after all serving their own countrymen if they do so. British troops may also be told, "now you shall remain here not to protect British interests and British lives, but to protect India against foreign aggression, even against internal insurrection, as if you were defending and serving your own countrymen." That is my dream. I know that I shall not realise that dream here. That is what I feel. The evidence that is before me, the evidence of my senses, tells me that I am not going to realise that dream today and here, as a result of the deliberations of this conference. But, I should still cherish that dream. It is the dream I should like to cherish up to the end of my time. Seeing the atmosphere here, I know that I cannot infect British statesmen or the British public with the idea or with the ideal that this could be also their cherished mission. But that is how I would interpret the Prime Minister's declaration; that is how I would interpret Lord Irwin's wishes. It should be the proud privilege and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings wherewith we can fly,

A Cherished Dream

even as they fly. That is really my ambition, and, therefore, I say, I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon Responsible Government although I cannot control my Defence.

Past Record

AFTER ALL, India is not a nation which has never known how to defend herself. There is all the material there. There are the Musalmans, standing in no dread of foreign invasion. The Sikhs will refuse to think that they can be conquered by anybody. The Gurkha, immediately he develops the national mind, will say: "Alone, I can defend India." Then there are the Rajputs who are supposed to be responsible for a thousand Thermopylae. That is what the Englishman, Colonel Tod, has told us. Colonel Tod has taught us to believe that every pass in Rajputana is a Thermopylae. Do these people stand in need of learning the arts of defence? I assume that, if I shoulder the burden of responsibility, all these people are going to join hands. I am here writhing in agony to see that we have not yet come to terms on the communal question; but whenever the communal settlement comes, it must presuppose that we are going to trust each other. Whether the rule is predominantly Musalman or Sikh or Hindu, they will not rule as Hindus or Musalmans or Sikhs, but they will rule as Indians. If we have distrust of one another, then, we want British people there, if we do not want to be killed by one another. But then let us not talk of Responsible Government.

I, at least, cannot possibly think that we have got Responsible Government, without control of the Army. I feel deep down at the bottom of my heart

that if we are to have Responsible Government, — and the Congress wants Responsible Government, — the Congress has faith in itself, in the masses of the people, and in all those brave military races, and what is more, the Congress has faith also in Englishmen some day doing their duty and transferring complete control to us, — we must infect the British with that love for India, which would enable her to stand on her own feet. If the British people think that we shall require a century before that can be done, then for that century the Congress will wander in the wilderness. The Congress must go through that terrible fiery ordeal, it must go through the storm of distress, of misrepresentation and — if it becomes necessary and if it is God's will — a shower of bullets. If this happens, it will be because we cannot trust one another and because Englishmen and Indians have different angles of vision.

Safeguards

THAT IS MY fundamental position. I do not want to go into it in detail. I have put this case as forcibly as I am capable of putting it. But if this one thing is admitted, I am resourceful enough to submit and frame safeguard after safeguard which will commend themselves to any unbiassed mind, provided that it is common cause that those sefeguards must be in the interests of India. But I want to go further and endorse what Lord Irwin said, that although the safeguards in the Pact are stated to be in the interests of India, they must be considered, as in the mutal interests of India and England. I do not conceive a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Great Britain, provided that we contemplate a

partnership, a partnership at will, and a partnership on absolutely equal terms.

The very reasons that I have given you today for demanding complete control for the Army are also reasons for pleading for and for demanding control over our external affairs.

External Affairs

NOT BEING well versed in what is really meant by external affairs, and having to plead my ignorance of what is stated in those Reports of the Round Table Conference on the subject, I asked my friends, Mr. Iyengar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to give me a first lesson in what is meant by external affairs and foreign relations. I have got their reply before me. They state that the words mean relations with neighbouring powers, relations with Indian States, relations with other powers in international affairs, and relations with the Dominions. If these are external affairs, I think we are quite capable of shouldering the burden and discharging our obligations in connection with external affairs. We can undoubtedy negotiate terms of peace with our own kith and kin, with our own neighbours, with our own countrymen, the Indian princes. We can cultivate the freindliest relations with our neighbours, the Afghans, and across the seas with the Japanese; and certainly we can negotiate with the Dominions also. If the Dominions will not have our countrymen to live there in perfect self-respect, we can deal with them.

It may be that I am talking out of folly, but you should understand that the Congress has thousands and tens of thousands of foolish men and women like me, and it is on behalf of these that I respectfully register this claim, again saying that with

the safeguards we have conceived we shall literally fulfil our obligations.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has sketched the safeguards. With much of what he has said I entirely associate myself, but those are not the only safeguards. If Englishmen and Indians put their heads together, sailing in the same direction with no mental reservation whatsoever, it is possible, I submit with every confidence, that we would bring into being safeguards which will be honourable alike to India and to England, and which would be a guarantee for the safety of every British life and the safety of every British interest to which India pledges her honour. Lord Chancellor, I cannot go further. I tender a thousand apologies for taking up the time of this meeting, but you can understand the feeling that is welling up in me sitting here day after day, and thinking of it day and night, how these deliberations can come to a successful issue. It is a feeling of absolute good will towards Englishmen, and a feeling of absolute service to my countrymen.

VIII

COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION

LORD CHANCELLOR and friends, I would like to tender my congratulations to Mr. Benthall on his very temperate statement, and I wish that he could have seen his way not to spoil that admirable statement by importing two sentiments. One sentiment expressed by him was practically that Europeans or Britishers claimed what they are claiming because of their having conferred certain benefits on India. I wish that he could have omitted this opinion, but having expressed it there should have been no surprise expressed, as was expressed by Lord Reading, that there was a courteous retort from Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, and now, as we have heard, reinforced by Sir Phiroze Sethna. I wish also that he could have omitted the threat that has been used in that statement on behalf of the great corporation that he represents. He said that the European support to the national demand was conditional upon Indian nationalists accepting the demands of the European community expressed by Mr. Benthall, as also the separatist tendency expressed a few days ago in the demand for a separate electorate, and their joining that separatist combination, about which it was my painful position to speak the other day. I have

endeavoured to study the resolution passed at the last Conference. Although you are familiar with it, I want to read that resolution again, because I shall want to say a few things in connection with that resolution.

> "At the instance of the British commercial community the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British commercial community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian born subjects."

The rest I need not read. I am extremely sorry, in spite of the great regard and respect I entertain for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru aud Mr. Jayakar, to have to dissent from this sweeping resolution. I was, therefore, delighted yesterday when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru readily admitted that it was vague and that it was susceptible of improvement. You will see the general character of this resolution if you will carefully study it. There is to be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian born subjects. if I have interpreted this correctly, I think that it is a terrific thing, and I, for one, can not possibly commit the Congress to a resolution of this character, much less commit the future Government of India.

There is here no qualification whatsoever. The rights of the British commercial community are to stand on exactly the same footing as those of Indian born subjects. Therefore it is not as if there is to be any racial discrimination, or anything of that kind; here the British commercial community enjoy absolutely the same rights as Indian born subjects. I want to state, with all the emphasis that I can command, that I can not even endorse the formula

that the rights of all Indian born subjects themselves could even be equal or guaranteed. I shall show you the reason presently.

To Equalise Conditions

I THINK THAT you will readily grant that in order to equalise conditions, the future Government of India would be constantly obliged to do what the existing Government has neglected to do, namely, continually to discriminate in favour of the famishing Indians against those who have been blest by nature or by the government themselves with riches and other privileges. It will be necessary for the future Government, perhaps, to provide quarters free for labour, and the monied men of India might say, "If you provide quarters for them you should give corresponding grants to us, although we do not require quarters of that nature." But the State could not do so. There it would undoubtedly be discrimination in favour of the poor people, and the monied men might then say, according to this formula, that it would be discrimination against them.

I therefore, venture to suggest that this sweeping formula cannot possibly be accepted by us in this Conference when we are trying to assist His Majesty's Government—in so far as they will accept our assistance—in shaping the future Constitution of India.

The Formula for Discrimination

BUT HAVING said this I want to associate myself completely with the British merchants and European houses in their legitimate demand that there should be no racial discrimination. I, who had to fight the great South African Government for over 20 years in order to resist their colour bar

and their discriminating legislation directed against Indians as such, could be no party to discrimination of that character against the British friends who are at present in India, or who may in future seek entry. I speak on behalf of the Congress also. The Congress too holds the same view.

Therefore, instead of this I would suggest a formula somewhat on these lines, a formula for which I had the pleasure and privilege of fighting General Smuts for a number of years. It may be capable of improvement but I simply suggest this for the consideration of this Committee and especially for the consideration of European friends. "No disqualification not suffered by Indian-born citizens of the State shall be imposed upon any persons lawfully residing in or entering India merely" — I emphasise the word 'merely" — "on the ground of race, colour or religion." I think that this is an all-satisfying formula. No Government could possibly go beyond this. The implications of this are, I am sorry to say, different from the deductions that Lord Reading drew or sought to draw from last year's formula. There would be no discrimination in this formula against a single Britisher, or for that matter, against a single European as such. I propose here to draw no distinction whatever between Britishers or other Europeans or Americans or Japanese. I would not copy the model of the British Colonies or the British Dominions which have, in my humble opinion, disfigured their Statue Books by importing legislation essentially based upon distinctions of colour and race.

India free, I would love to think, would give a different kind of lesson and set a different kind of example to the whole world. I would not wish India to live a life of complete isolation whereby it would live in water-tight compartments and allow nobody to

enter her borders or to trade within her borders. But, having said that, I have in my own mind many things that I would have to do in order to equalise conditions. I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the downtrodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And, if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathise with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.

The Untouchables

LOOK AT THE condition, if you will, of the untouchables, if the law comes to their assistance and sets apart miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; they are absolutely living at the mercy of the so-called higher castes, and also, let me say, at the mercy of the State. They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being able to seek the assistance of law. Well, the first act of the Legislature will then be to see that

in order somewhat to equalise conditions, these people are given grants freely.

From whose pockets are these grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans. Will they say that this is discrimination? They will be able to see that this is no discrimination against them because they are Europeans; it will be discrimination against them because they have got money and the others have got no money. It will be, therefore, a battle between the haves and the have-nots: and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all these classes hold the pistol at the heads of these dumb millions and say: You shall not have a Government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights.

I think I have given a sufficient indication of what the Congress stands for and of the implications of this formula that I have suggested. On no account will they find that there has been discrimination against them because they are English or because they are Europeans or Japanese or belong to any other race. The grounds that will be applicable to them for discrimination will be also the grounds for discrimination against Indian-born citizens.

Another Formula

I HAVE GOT another formula also, hurriedly drafted because I drafted it here as I was listening to Lord Reading and to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It is in connection with existing rights:

"No existing interest legitimately acquired, and not being in conflict with the best interests of the

nation in general, shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests."

I certainly have in mind what you find in the Congress resolution in connection with the taking over by the incoming Government of obligations that are being today discharged by the British Government. Just as we claim that these obligations must be examined by an impartial tribunal before they are taken over by us, so should existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny when necessary. There is no question, therefore, of repudiation but merely of taking over under examination, under audit. We have here some of us who have made a study of the privileges and the monopolies enjoyed by Europeans, but let it not be merely Europeans: there are Indians—I have undoubtedly several Indians in mind—who are today in possession of land which has been practically given away to them not for any service rendered to the nation but for some service rendered, I cannot even say to the Government, because I do not think that the Government has benefited, but to some official; and if you tell me that those concessions and those privileges are not to be examined by the State I again tell you that it will be impossible to run the machinery of Government on behalf of the 'have-nots,' on behalf of the dispossessed. Hence, you will see here that there is nothing stated in connection with the Europeans. The second formula also is applicable equally to the Europeans as it is applicable to Indians, as it is applicable, say, to Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas and Sir Phiroze Sethna. If they have obtained concessions which have been obtained because they did some service to the officials of the day and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of the Government I would quickly dispossess them. I would not consider

them because they are Indians, and I would just as readily dispossess Sir Hubert Carr or Mr. Benthall, however admirable they are and however friendly they are to me. The law will be no respector of persons whatsoever. I give you that assurance. After having received that assurance I am unable to go any further. So that is really what is implied by 'legitimately acquired' — that every interest must have been taintless, it must be above suspicion, like Caesar's wife, and therefore, we shall expect to examine all these things when they come under the notice of that Government.

Then you have "not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation." I have in mind certain monopolies, legitimately acquired, undoubtedly, but which have been brought into being in conflict with the best interests of the nation. Let me give you an illustration which will amuse you somewhat, but which is on natural ground. Take this white elephant which is called New Delhi. Crores have been spent upon it. Suppose that the future Governmen comes to the conclusion that seeing that we have got this white elephant it ought to be turned to some use. Imagine that in Old Delhi there is a plague or cholera going on, and we want hospitals for the poor people. What are we to do? Do you suppose the National Government will be able to build hospitals, and so on? Nothing of the kind. We will take charge of those buildings and put these plague-stricken people in them and use them as hospitals, because I contend that those buildings are in conflict with the best interests of the nation. They do not represent the millions of India. They may be representative of the monied men who are sitting at the table; they may be representative of His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal, or of Sir Purushottamdas

Thakurdas, or of Sir Phiroze Sethna, or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, but they are not representative of those who lack even a place to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to the conclusion that that place is unnecessary, no matter what interests are concerned they will be dispossessed, and they will be dispossessed I may tell you, without any compensation, because, if you want this Government to pay compensation it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.

It is a bitter pill which has got to be swallowed if a Government, as Congress conceives it, comes into being. In order to take away something from here, I have no desire to deceive you into the belief that everything will be quite all right. I want, on behalf of the Congress, to lay all the cards on the table. I want no mental reservation of any description whatsoever; and then, if the Congress position is acceptable, nothing will please me better, but , if that position is not acceptable, if today I feel I cannot possibly touch your hearts and cannot carry you with me, then the Congress must continue to wander and must continue the process of proselytisation until you are all converted and allow the milllons of India to feel that at last they have got a National Government.

Criminal Trials

UP TO NOW, no one has said a word in connection with two lines which appear at the end of this resolution, namely: "It was agreed that the existing rights of the European community in India in regard to criminal trials should be maintained."

I must confess that I have not been able to study all the implications of it. For some days I have been

engaged in carrying on friendly and private conversations with Sir Hubert Carr, Mr. Benthall and some friends. I was discussing this very theme with them and I asked them to tell me what these two things meant and they said it was the same thing for the other communities. I have not ascertained what that means. It means, I suppose, that the other communities also may demand their own jury. This refers to trial by jury. I am afraid, I cannot possibly endorse this formula.

I cannot and at all be a party to such reservations. I think that a National Government cannot possibly be shut in by those restrictions. All the communities today who will be the future Indian nation must start with good will, must start with mutual trust or not at all. If we are told that we cannot possibly have responsible Government that will be a state of things one can understand. But we are told there must be all these reservations and safeguards. It would not be liberty and responsible government but it would be all safeguards. Safeguards would eat away the whole of the Government. If all these safeguards are to be granted and all the talk here takes concrete shape and we are told that we are to get responsible government it will be almost on a par with the responsible government that prisoners have in their jails. They too have complete independence immediately the cell door is locked and the jailor goes. The prisoners inside that cell about 10 ft. square or 7 ft. by 3 ft. have complete independence. I do not ask for that kind of complete independence, with the jailors safeguarding comfortably their own rights.

Therefore, I appeal to our European friends that they should withdraw this idea of safeguarding their rights. I venture to suggest that the two formulae

that I have put forward should be adopted. You may cut them about in any manner you like. If the wording is not satisfactory by all means suggest some other wording. But outside these formulae of a negative character, whereby there is no bar sinister placed against you, I venture to say, you may not—shall I say 'dare not'—ask for more. So much with reference to existing interests and future trade.

Key Industries

I PROPOSE TO associate myself entirely with the sentiments that Mr. Jayakar expressed while speaking about key industries. The Congress conception is that if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and admininistration and development of the key industries.

A poor undeveloped country like India is not to be judged as a highly developed individualist Island like Great Britain may be. What is good for Great Britain today is, in my opinion, in many respects poison for India. India has got to develop her own economics, her own policy, her own method of dealing with her industries and everything else. Therefore, so far as the key industries are concerned, I am afraid that not merely the Britishers but many will feel that they are not having fair play. But I do not know what is the meaning of "fair play" against a State.

Coastal Shipping

AND THEN about Coastal Shipping, the Congress undoubtedly has the greatest sympathy with the desire to develop that trade; but if in the Bill about the coastal trade, there is any discrimination against Europeans as such, I will join hands with the

Europeans and fight that Bill or the proposal whic discriminates against Englishmen because they are Englishmen. But there are those vast interests that have come into being. I have travelled fairly frequently up the great river ways of Bengal and I have travelled years ago up the Irrawaddy. I know something of that trade. By concessions, privileges, favours, whatever you call them, these huge corporations have built up industries, built up companies, and built up a trade which does not admit of any opposition whatsoever.

Some of you may have heard of a budding company between Chittagong and Rangoon. The Directors of that Company, poor struggling Musalmans, came to me in Rangoon and asked me if I could do anything. My whole heart went out to them, but there was nothing to be done. What could be done? There is the mighty British India Steam Navigation Company simply underselling this budding company and practically taking the passengers without any passage money at all. I could quote instance after instance of that character. It is not because it is a British company. If it were an Indian company that had usurped this thing it would be the same. Supposing an Indian company was taking away capital, as today we have Indians who instead of investing their capital in India invest their capital or invest their monies outside India. Imagine that there was a huge Indian Corporation that was taking away all its profits and investing them in some other parts of the world, fearing that the National Government was not going along a correct policy, and therefore, in order to keep their money intact, they were taking away that money outside. Go a littile step further with me and say that these Indian Directors in order to organise in a

most scientific and finished and perfect manner brought all the European skill that they could bring there and did not allow these struggling corporations to come into being, I would certainly have something to say and have legislation in order to protect the companies like the Chittagong company.

Some friends could not even float their ships along the Irrawaddy. They gave me chapter and verse in order to assure me that it became utterly impossible; they could not get their licenses, they could not get the ordinary facilities that one is entitled to. Every one of us knows what money can buy, what prestige can buy, and when such prestige is built up which kills all the saplings, to use the expression of Sir John Gorst, it then becomes necessary to lop off the tall poppies. Tall poppies ought not to be allowed to crush these saplings. That is really the case on behalf of the coastal trade. The Bill may have been clumsily worded. That does not matter, but I think the essence of it is absolutely correct.

The definition of a citizen is a terrific job. I could not possibly undertake on the spur of the moment to present, as I understand the Congress mentality of today, what will commend itself to the Congress or what will commend itself to me. It is, as I say, a matter on which I would like to confer with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other friends and try to understand what is at the back of their minds, because, I must confess, that out of this discussion I have not been able to reach the heart of the thing. I have made the Congress position absolutely clear, that we do not want any racial discrimination, but after having cleared that position I am not called upon now to give a summary decision for the opinion of the Congress in connection with the definition of the word "citizen."

Therefore, I would simply say in connection with the word "citizen" that I reserve my opinion as to the definition entirely for the time being.

Having said this, I want to close with this remark. I do not despair of finding a common formula that would satisfy the European friends. The negotiations in which I was privileged to be a party are, I think, still to continue. If my presence is required I will still attend that little Committee meeting. The idea is to enlarge it and give it a little less informal shape and find out a common basis.

I would again hark back to the point that, so far as I can understand it, I cannot think of any detailed scheme which could be incorporated in the Constitution. What can be incorporated in the constitution is some such formula as this, round which all kinds of rights can arise.

THERE IS NO conception here, as you see, of doing anything administratively. I have expressed my own hope in connection with the Federal and Supreme Court. To me the Federal Court is the Supreme Court; it is the final court of Appeal beyond which there would be no appeal whatsoever; it is my Privy Council and it is the palladium of liberty. It is the court to which every person who is at all aggrieved can go. A great Jurist in the Transvaal—and the Transvaal and South Africa generally have undoubtedly produced very great Jurists—once said to me, in regard to a very difficult case, "Though there may be no hope just now, I tell you that I have guided myself by one thing, or else I should not be a lawyer: the law teaches us lawyers that there is absolutely no wrong for which there is no remedy to be found in

Legal Remedy

a court of law, and if judges say there is no remedy, then those judges should be immediately unseated." I say that with all deference to you, Lord Chancellor.

I, therefore, think that our European friends may rest assured that the future Federal Court will not send them away empty-handed, as we expect to go away empty-handed, if we do not have the favour of the Ministers, who are the present advisers of His Majesty. I am still hoping that we shall have their ear and get round their better side, and then we may hope to go away with something substantial in our pockets; but, whether we go away with anything substantial in our pockets or not, I hope that if the Federal Court of my dreams comes into being then the Europeans and everybody—all the minorities—may rest assured that that Court will not fail them, though a puny individual like myself may fail them.*

* A discussion followed this speech:

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: Does Mahatma Gandhi propose that the National Government of the future should examine and investigate the title to property of everyone, and if so would it be any title acquired within a certain period of time or not? What is the machinery he proposes to bring into existence for the examination of that title and does he propose to give any compensation at all, or that the National Government should simply expropriate property which according to his view, or the view of the majority, seemed to have been wrongly acquired?

Gandhiji: So far as I understand, it is not intended that the administration should do the thing; everything that is done will be above board. It will be done by legal machinery.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: What is that legal machinery to be?

Gandhiji: I have not at the present moment thought of any limitation. I think that there is no limitation running against a wrong.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: Under your National Government therefor no title in India is safe?

Gandhiji: Under our National Government the court will decide these things and if there is any undue fear about these things I think it is possible to satisfy every legitimate doubt. I have no hesitation in saying that generally speaking this is a formula which should be accepted. Where complaints are made that there are legitimate rights acquired it should be open to the courts of law to examine these rights. I am not going to say today in taking over the Government that I shall examine no rights whatsoever no titles that have been acquired.

IX

FINANCE

MY LORD, I followed your (Lord Reading's) speech on the very important subject of Financial safeguards with the greatest attention and with all the respect that is undoubtedly your due. In connection with that speech I read the paragraphs on Finance in the Federal Structure Committee's Report of last year, I think they are, paragraphs 18, 19 and 20, and I regret to have to record my opinion that I cannot endorse the restrictions that have been suggested in these paragraphs. My position, and, I think, the position of all of us, must be very difficult when we do not know exactly what are the financial burdens.

Scrutiny of Obligations

LET ME EXPLAIN. I would naturally have to consider the thing from one point of view if 'Army' was a reserved subject, and another point of view if 'Army' was a transferred subject. I have also very great difficulty in expressing my view by reason of the fact that the Congress is emphatically of opinion that the obligations to be taken over by the incoming Government should be subject to audit and impartial examination.

I have in my hands a Report prepared by four impartial men, two of them ex-Advocates-General of the Bombay High Court; I mean Messrs. Bahadurji and Bhulabhai Desai. The third examiner, or member of the Committee is Professor Shah, for a long time professor in the University of Bombay, a man having an all-India reputation and author of valuable works on Indian economics. The fourth member of the Committee is Mr. Kumarappa, who holds European degrees and whose opinions on Finance command considerable acceptance and influence. These four gentlemen have submitted an elaborate Report in which they, as I hold, make out a conclusive case for an impartial enquiry, and they show that many of the obligations do not really belong to India.

In this connection, I want very respectfully to say that the Congress has never suggested, as it has been viciously suggested against it, that one single farthing of national obligations should ever be repudiated by the Congress. What the Congress has, however, suggested is that some of the obligations, which are supposed to belong to India, ought not to be saddled upon India and should be taken over by Great Britain. You will find in these volumes a critical examination of all these obligations. I do not propose to weary this Committee with a recital of these thing. Those who would care to study these two volumes may, and I have no doubt will, study them with considerable profit, and they will, perhaps, discover that some of these obligations should never have been saddled upon India. That being the case, I feel that if one knew exactly where one was, it would be possible to give a decisive opinion, but subject to that, I venture to suggest, that the restrictions, or the so-called safeguards, that have been

suggested in paragraphs 18, 19 and 20 of this report of the Federal Structure sub-Committee will, instead of helping India on her course, hinder her progress at every step.

India's Interests

YOU, MY LORD, were pleased to say that the question before you was not one of want of confidence in Indian Ministers. On the contrary, you had every hope that the Indian Ministers would do as well as any other Minister, but you were concerned with the credit of India outside the borders of India, that the investors who supplied capital to India and who brought their money to India at reasonable rates of interest would not be satisfied if there were not safeguards of the type suggested here; and you went on further, if I remember rightly, to say that when there were any investments in India from here, or when there were any monies sent to India, it was not to be supposed that they were not also for the interest of India.

If I remember rightly, Your Lordship used the words "obviously it was in the interests of India". I was really waiting to find some illustrations, but no doubt you took it for granted that we would know those matters or those illustrations which you had in mind. I had really converse illustrations in mind while you were speaking, and I said to myself, I have within my own experience several illustrations where I could show that the interests of India were not in those particular illustrations identical with the interests of Great Britain, that the two were in conflict, and that therefore, we could not possibly say that every time there were loans from Great Britain, they were in the interest of India.

Take, for instance so many wars. Take the wars of Afghanistan. As a young man I read with great avidity the history of wars in Afghanistan written by the late Sir John Kay and I have a vivid recollection left on my mind that most of these wars were certainly not in the interests of India: and not only that, but that the Governor-General had bungled over these wars. The late Dadabhai Naoroji taught us, young men, that the history of British Finance in India was a history of muddle and bungling where it was not also one of exploitation of India.

Exchange Ratio

THE LORD CHANCELLOR uttered the warning, and you were pleased to endorse his warning, that Finance, at the present moment, was a very delicate matter and that, therefore, those of us who took part in the discussion should be cautious and careful so as not to mishandle the subject and create difficulties or add to the difficulties that already face the Finance Minister in India. I, therefore, do not propose to go into any details; but, I cannot help saying one thing in connection with this increase in the ratio. I mean when the rupee was appreciated to 1/6 from 1/4. Now, there the measure was adopted in the face of almost unanimous opposition from Indians — Indians who were not in any way connected with the Congress. They were all independent, some of them great experts in finance who knew exactly what they were saying. Here again one finds that the Indian interest was really subordinated to foreign interests. It does not require an expert to know that a depreciated rupee is always, or as a rule, would be in the interest of the cultivators. I was very much struck by an admission made by two financiers here, that if the rupee, instead of being linked

to sterling, had been left to itself, at least for the time being, it would have been of great advantage to the cultivators. They were going to the last extreme and thinking of some catastrophe that might befall India if the rupee left to itself went down to the intrinsic value, namely 6d or 7d. Personally, I have not even then been able to see that really the Indian cultivator would be in any shape or form damaged.

That being the case, I cannot possibly endorse safeguards that would interfere with the full discharge of his responsibility by the Indian Finance Minister, and that responsibility conceived predominantly in the interests of the ryots.

Resources

BUT I WANT to draw the attention of this Committee to one thing more. In spite of the caution uttered by the Lord Chancellor and you, My Lord, I feel somehow or other that if Indian Finance was properly managed, entirely in the interests of India, we should not be subject to fluctuations as seriously as we are today in the foreign market, the fluctuations in London. I want to give you my reason for it. When I first became acquainted with the writing of Sir Daniel Hamilton I approached him with considerable diffidence and hesitation. I knew nothing practically of Indian finance, I was absolutely new to the subject but, he with his zeal insisted upon my studying the papers that he continued to send me. As we all know, he has large interests in India, he has himself held offices of importance and is himself an able financier. He is today making experiments himself along the lines he has suggested, but this is the one striking thought that he has placed before all who would care to understand his mode of looking at Indian finance,

when he says that India does not need to look to the gold standard or to the silver standard or to any metallic standard, India has metal all its own, and he says that that consists in her innumerable countless million of labours. It is true that the British Government has not declared itself insolvent in connection with Indian Finance, that it has been, up to now, able to pay the way; but at what cost? It has been at the cost of the cultivator, the money has been squeezed from the cultivator. Instead of thinking in terms of rupees, if the authorities had consulted and thought of finance in terms of these masses, they could have managed the affairs of India infinitely better than they have hitherto done, they would not then have been obliged to fall back upon foreign market. Everybody recognises, and British financiers have told us, that for nine years out of ten India has always a favourable balance.

That is to say, whenever India has, what may be called, an eight anna or ten anna year, eight annas is really enough to give her a favourable balance. Then India produces through bountiful nature, from Mother Earth, more than enough to pay for all her obligations, and more than for all the imports that she may ever require. If it is true, and I hold that it is true, a country like India does not really need to fall back upon the foreign capitalist. She has been made to fall back upon the foreign capitalist because of the enormous drain that has taken place from India in order to pay what are called the 'home charges', in order to pay the terrific charges for India's Defence. she is utterly unable to discharge these obligations, and yet, they have been met by a revenue policy which has been condemned in unmeasured terms by one of the officiating Commissioners, the late Ramesh Chandra

Dutt. I know he engaged in a controvesy with the late Lord Curzon on this very topic, and we Indians came to the conclusion that the right was on the side of the late Ramesh Chandra Dutt.

But I want to go a step further. It is known that these millions of cultivators remain idle for six months in the year. If the British Government saw to it that these men would not remain idle for six months in the year, imagine the wealth that they would produce. Why should we then need ever to fall back upon the foreign market? That is how the whole idea of finance appears before me, a layman, a man who continually thinks of these masses and wants to feel as they would feel. They would say we have all the labour therefore, we do not want to fall back upon any foreign capital. So long as we labour, the whole world would want the products of our labour. And it is true, the world today wants the products of our labour. We would be able to produce those things that the world would voluntarily and willingly take from us. That has been the condition of India of ages past. There, I really do not share the fear that you, My Lord, have expressed in connection with Indian finance. In my opinion, unless we have control over our own door-keepers, and over our own purse, absolutely unrestricted, we shall not be able to shoulder the responsiblity, and it will not be a responsibility worth the name.

Nature of Safeguards and Guarantees

I AM NOT in a position at the present moment to suggest any safeguards at all—not until I know that the nation is to have complete responsibility, complete control over her Army, over the Civil Service, that the nation will be at perfect liberty to take over so many of the Civilians as

the nation would want, so many of the soldiers as the nation would want and on terms that would be suitable for a poor nation like India. Unless I know all these things it is practically impossible for me to suggest the safeguards. As a matter of fact, when all these things are taken into consideration, probably, there will be no necessity for any safeguards, unless one starts with a want of confidence in India's ability to shoulder her burden and India's ability to carry on the administration of the country in a peaceful manner. The only danger under such circumstances that I can possibly conceive would be that the moment we take charge there would be utter chaos and disorder. Now, if that is the fear that seizes the British mind, then, there is no meeting ground. We take responsibility, we ask for responsibliity, we demand responsibility, because, we have got that confidence that we would be able to carry on our affairs in a decent manner and, I feel, certainly in a much better manner than British administrators have done or could ever do — not because they are not able. I will grant that they are much abler then we are; I will grant that they have got an organising capacity which we have to learn at their feet. But we have one thing. We know our country, we know our people and we should, therefore, be able to run our Government cheaply. We would avoid all the quarrels, and we, not having any imperialistic ambition, would not go to war with Afghans or any other nation, but we would cultivate friendly relations, and they would have nothing to fear from us.

That is the kind of ideal that runs through my mind as I conceive Indian Finance. You will see, therefore, that in my opinion Indian Finance does not

occupy such a large place in my conception, and not such a dangerous position as it evidently occupies in your mind, or the Lord Chancellor's mind or in the minds of British Ministers with whom I had the privilege of discussing this question. Hence, and for the reasons that I have explained, I must respectfully say that it is not possible for me to subscribe to the safeguards that are suggested here, or to endorse the fears that agitate the British public or the responsible men in Great Britain.

For every obligation that the National Government undertakes there will be proper guarantees, such guarantees as a nation can possibly give, and assurances of a right type forthcoming. But, in my opinion, they will never be of the type or the character described in these paragraphs. After all, if there are, and there would be I have no doubt, certain obligations that we would have to take over and we would have to discharge towards Great Britain, supposing that we bungled and did not do anything whatsoever, no assurance given on paper would be worth anything. Or supposing that India, when she comes into her own, unfortunately for her, has a series of bad seasons, then again, I do not know that any safeguard that might possibly be conceived would be enough to squeeze money out of India. In these critical circumstances—unforeseen circumstances—visitations of nature, it is impossible for any national Government to give guarantees.

I can only close with the great sorrow that has overtaken me in connection with these things that I should find myself in conflict with so many administrators who have experience of Indian affairs and also of so many of my countrymen who are attending this Round Table Conference; but, if I am to discharge my

duty as representative of the Congress, even at the risk of incurring displeasure, I must give expression to the views I hold in common with so many members of the Congress.

* At the conclusion of the speech Lord Reading remarked:

I do not think that you quite accurately represented what I had said. It may be a misinterpretation of some observations that were made. All I want to say is that I have already given in the speeches that I have made with regard to finance but I did not want it to be assumed that there is no answer to it.

Gandhiji: Of course not.

X

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

I TENDER my congratulations to Professor Lees-Smith for being responsible for this debate, and I tender my congratulations to you, My Lord Chancellor, for having allowed this debate. I thing that Professor Lees-Smith has shown amazing optimism in initiating this debate. He has come as a Physician with an oxygen cylinder and he is trying to pump oxygen into a dying body. I do not say that we are a dying body because of this rumour or threat of provincial autonomy divorced from central responsibility. In my own humble manner, almost from the commencement of these proceedings, I have been uttering words of warning and I said so in so many words that I was oppressed with a sense of unreality which has been dawning upon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru for the last few days; I happen to know this because he has given me the privilege of taking me into his confidence in common with his other friends and comrades, if I can also bracket myself as one of his comrades.

Out of his ripe experience of administrative affairs, having held high offices in the Government, he has warned us of the danger of Provincial Autonomy so called. I am very often an unrepentant sinner. He had reasons for issuing this warning especially in connection with me, because I had dared to discuss the question of Provincial Autonomy with so many English friends who are responsible public men in this country, and he had heard of it, and so he gave me ample warning. It was for that reason that you find me as one of the co-signatories, not to the document that has been placed before you, My Lord Chancellor, but another similar document that was issued to the press about ten days ago and was addressed to the Prime Minister. I told him, as I say here, that both he and the others who have spoken after him, and I, reached the same goal though through different routes. 'Fools walk in where Angels fear to tread.' Not having had any experience of administration actually I felt that if the Provincial Autonomy was the Provincial Autonomy of my conception I for one would not mind handling the fruit, feeling the thing, and seeing whether it really answered my purpose. I love to meet friends who may be opponents in policy on their own platform and find out their difficulties, and find out also whether what they are offering is likely to lead one to the same place, and in that spirit and in that sense I ventured to discuss Provincial Autonomy, but I found at once on discussion that what they meant was certainly not the Provincial Autonomy that I meant, and so I told my friends also that I would be quite safe if they left me alone, that I was not going to sell the interests of the country out of a foolish conception of Provincial Autonomy, or out of impatience to get

something for the country. What I am anxious to do is, having come all these miles with the greatest diffidence, having come here to tender my whole-hearted co-operation to the Government and to this Conference without the slightest mental reservation, and having applied that spirit of co-operation in thought, word and deed, to leave nothing undone, I have not hesitated even to go into the danger zone, and hence, I have dared to talk about and discuss Provincial Autonomy. But I have come to the conclusion that you, or the British Ministers, do not contemplate giving India that measure of Provincial Autonomy which would satisfy a man of my mentality, which would satisfy the Congress, and which would reconcile the Congress to taking up Provincial Autonomy, although there may be delay in getting responsibility at the Centre.

A Cure for Terrorism

LET ME MAKE my meaning clear, because, here too, I am adopting a somewhat different line of argument, and I am most anxious not to be misunderstood. Let me take, therefore, one illustration. I want to take for my illustration Bengal, because it is one of the Provinces today in India which is deeply affected. I know that there is a terrorist school active in Bengal. Everybody ought to realise by this time that I can have no manner of sympathy with that terrorist school in any shape or form. I am as convinced as I have ever been that terrorism is the worst kind of action that any reformer can take up. Terrorism is the very worst thing for India in a special manner, because India is a foreign soil for terrorism to flourish in. I am convinced that those young Indians who are giving their lives for what they consider to be a good cause are simply

throwing away their lives, and that they are not bringing the country one inch nearer the goal, which is common, I hope, to us all.

I am convinced of all these things, but, having been convinced of them, supposing that Bengal had Provincial Autonomy today, what would Bengal do? Bengal would set free every one of the detinues, an Autonomous Bengal would not hunt down the terrorists, but would try to reach them and convert them. I should approach them with every confidence and wipe out terrorism from Bengal.

But let me go a little step further, in order to drive home the truth that is in me. If Bengal was autonomous, that autonomy itself would really remove terrorism from Bengal, because these terrorists foolishly consider that their action is the shortest cut to freedom; but, having attained that freedom, the terrorism would cease.

Today, there are a thousand young men, some of whom, I would dare swear, have absolutely nothing in common with the school of terrorism, a thousand young men who have not been tried and who have not been convicted; they have all, every one of them, been arrested on suspicion. So far as Chittagong is concerned, Mr. Sen Gupta, who was Lord Mayor of Calcutta, who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, and who was also President of the Provincial Congresss Committee in Bengal, is here today. He has brought to me a report signed by members of all the parties in Bengal in connection with Chittagong, and it is sad reading. It is painful to read this report, but the substance of this report is that there has been an inferior edition of the Black and Tans in Chittagong and Chittagong is not a place of no importance on the map of India.

We now see there has been a flag-showing ceremony, and in making this demonstration all the military forces have been concentrated together in Calcutta, and these demonstrations have gone through ten streets of Calcutta.

At whose expense, and what will it do? Will it frighten the terrorists? I promise you it will not. Will it then wean the Congress from Civil Disobedience? It will not do so. The Congress people are pledged to this thing. Suffering is the badge of their tribe. They have determined to go through every form of suffering. It cannot, therefore, frighten them. Our children would laugh at this show, and it is our purpose, to show the children that they must not be terrified, they must not be frightened by this display of artillery, guns, air force and so on.

Of the Right Kind

SO THAT YOU see what is my conception of Provincial Autonomy. All these things would be impossible; I would not allow a single soldier to enter the Province of Bengal; I would not pay a single farthing for the upkeep of an Army which I may not command. In such a Provincial Autonomy, you do not contemplate a state in Bengal whereby I can set free all these detinues and remove from the statute book the Bengal Regulations. If it is Provincial Autonomy, then it is independence for Bengal precisely in the same manner as the Responsible Government I have seen growing up in Natal. That is a little colony, but it had its own independent existence; it had its own volunteer force and so on. You do not contemplate that thing for Bengal or any of these Provinces. It will be the Centre still dictating, still ruling, still doing all these things. That is not the Provincial

Autonomy of my conception. That was why I said if you present me with that live Provincial Autonomy, I shall be prepared to consider that proposition; but I am also convinced that that autonomy is not coming. If that autonomy was coming we would not see all these protracted proceedings that have taken place here; then we would have managed our own affairs in an entirely different manner.

But what really grieves me still more is this we have all been brought here with one single purpose. I have been brought here specially through that very pact in which it is written in so many words that I was coming here to discuss and to receive really responsibility at the Centre: Federation with all its responsibility,—safeguards undoubtedly—but sefaguards in the interests of India. I have said in season and out of season that I would consider every sefaguard that is necessary. I personally do not really agree with Professor Lees Smith or anybody else that constitution-building should take all these long years—three years. He thinks of Provincial Autonomy in eighteen months. My folly tells me that all this time is not necessary. Where the people have made up their mind, the Parliament has made up its mind, the Ministers have made up their minds and the public opinion here, then these things do not take time. I have seen them not taking time where there has been one mind applied; but I do know that there is not one mind applied but there are many minds, all following their own course and all perhaps with a disruptive tendency. That being so, I feel convinced that, in spite of this debate, not only is there going to be no responsibility at the Centre, but there is going to be no tangible result out of this Conference. It hurts me, it pains me, that all this precious time of

British Ministers, of the nation and of all these Indians who have come here, should have been wasted; but I am very much afraid that, in spite of this oxygen cylinder the result will be nil. I do not say that the result is therefore bound to be that Provincial Autonomy will be thrust down our throats.

Effect of Repression

I DO NOT really fear that result. What I fear is something still more dreadful—that nothing at all is going to come out of this thing but terrible repression in India. I do not mind that repression; repression will only do us good. If we have repression in the right time, I will consider that also as a very fine outcome of this Conference. Repression has never done harm to a single nation which is sailing for her destined goal with a fixed determination, for that repression is really an oxygen draught, though not the draught that Professor Lees Smith has administered.

But what I fear is that the slender thread which I had again built up of co-operation with the British people and with British Ministers is about to snap and that I should again declare myself a convinced non-co-operator and civil resister—that I should redeliver this message of non-co-operation and civil resistance to the millions of India, no matter how many air balloons will float over India or how many tanks will be brought to India. They will have no result. You do not know today that they produce no results even upon the tender young children. We teach them to dance with joy when bullets are flying about them like so many crackers. We teach them to suffer for the freedom of their country. I do not despair. I do not think that because nothing happens here there will be chaos in the land;

not so long as Congress remains untarnished and nonviolence goes forward throughout the length and breadth of India undiminished. I have been told so often that it is the Congress that is responsible for this terrorism. I take this opportunity of denying that with all the strength at my command. On the contrary, I have evidence to show that it is the Congress creed of non-violence which up to now has kept the forces of terrorism in check. I regret we have not succeeded to the fullest extent, but as time goes on we hope to succeed. It is not as if this terrorism can bring freedom to India. I want freedom pecisely of the same type, only fuller than what Mr. Jayakar wants. I want full freedom for the masses and I know that terrorism can do no good to the masses. The masses are silent and disarmed. They do not know how to kill. I do not talk of individual instances but the masses of India have never moved in that direction.

Real Responsibility

WANTING THAT freedom for the masses I know that this terrorism can do no good whatsover. Whilst on the one hand Congress will fight British authority and its terrorism legalised, so also will Congress fight terrorism, illegal, on the part of youth. Between those two there was this course of co-operation opened up for the British nation and for me by Lord Irwin. He had built this bridge and I thought I was going to have a safe passage. I had a safe passage, I have come here to tender my co-operation. But I must confess to you that apart even from what Professor Lees-Smith has said, and apart from what has been said on this side also, by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and by Mr. Sastri and the other speakers, the

limited responsibility at the Centre, which they have in view, would not satisfy me.

I want that responsibility at the Centre that will give me, as you all know, control of the Army and Finance. I know I am not going to get that here now, and I know there is not a British man ready for that, and, therefore, I know I must go back and yet invite the nation to a course of suffering. I have taken part in this debate because I wanted to make my position absolutely clear. What I have been saying to friends in private sitting rooms with reference to Provincial Autonomy I have now said openly at this table, and I have told you what I mean by Provincial Autonomy and what would really satisfy me. I close by saying that I sail in the same boat as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others, and I feel convinced that real Provincial Autonomy is an impossibility unless there is responsibility at the Centre, or unless you are prepared to so weaken the Centre that the provinces will be able to dictate to the Centre. I know that you are not prepared today to do this. I know that this Conference does not conceive a weak Centre but a strong one, when this Federal Government is brought into being.

A strong Centre governed and administered by an alien authority, and a strong autonomy, are a contradiction in terms. Hence, I feel that Provincial Autonomy and Central Responsibility have, really speaking, to go together. But, I say again that I have an open mind. If somebody will convince me that there is Provincial Autonomy, such as I have conceived for instance for Bengal, available, I would grasp it.

XI

MODUS OPERANDI

Rule of Majority

I DO NOT think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of liberty of practically a whole Continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, or even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that so and so is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or decisions will be taken by the ordinary

rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority.

But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow delegates. But I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely, what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Stucture Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent of the population of India, that is to say the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went futher: that the Congress claimed also, by right of service, to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, and the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasise that claim.

Congress Represents India

ALL THE OTHER Parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India and all interests. It is no communal organisation; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organisation that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to

my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognise, as it has been recognised, that the Indian National Congress is a daily growing organisation, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India, that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit its 700,000 villages.

And yet, here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India wide national organisation, bereft of any communal bias: that it does represent all minorities which have lodged their claim here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim — I hold unjustifiably — to represent 46 per cent of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these minorities.

What a great difference it would be today if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognised. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this Table, and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this Table. I say so for this reason: Congress is a powerful organisation; Congress is an orgainsation which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress

you would welcome an organisation which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organisation, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances.

But no. Although you have invited the Congress you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

The way of Negotiation

THE CONGRESS represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word "rebellion" must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yeilds to India's demands by argument. But the Congrees does not hold quite that view. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasent to you.

The Old Way

I HEARD SEVERAL speakers—I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as

a schoolboy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used by, what I consider, blind lovers of liberty and freedom. And the historion has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for 'the error into which he himself was betrayed, and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed, through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen.

I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mis-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of

regard for the great Calcutta Corporation, and out of regard for truth, and on behalf of those who are not here to-night to put in their defence, that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation.

If our boys in Calcutta were taught those verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited, I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the school-masters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation. Charges of this nature have been brought against Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust.

The New Way

THE CONGRESS then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following up that method. But again, I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no Government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the Government may not tolerate, no Government has tolerated open rebellion. No Government may tolerate civil disobedience, but Governments have to succumb even to these forces, as

the British Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts, a brave General, a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect. Things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India, Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing: the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late today to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country, if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them again to a fight of that character, but, if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives: it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that, I am paraphrasing his inimitable language—'Do you not cosider for one moment that we Englishmen

do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless?' I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched then will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman, Lord Irwin, had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, *lathis* or no *lathis*, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

The Price

WHILST THERE is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore, please remember, that I will count no sacrifice too great if, by chance, I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like; a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the

artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, means the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and you will find the Congress itself always in a compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister, I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find a ground where you can apply the spirit of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

Our Goal

I WAS SHOWN last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said, Have you seen the definition of Dominion? I read the definition of "Dominion" and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word "Dominion" was exhaustively defined and it had not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word "Dominion" shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what complete independence means. In a way I was relieved.

I said, I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word "dominion"; because I am out of it. But I want complete independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said, "Yes, you can have complete independence, but what is the meaning of complete indépendence?", and again we come to different definitions.

One of your great statesmen, was debating with me, and said, "Honestly I did not know that you meant this by complete independence." He ought to have known but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him, "I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said, "Of course, that is logical." I replied: "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefit; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman, whom also you know, and whom also you respect. Among many things, he writes, "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship" and; as if I would not understand that, he says "your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says: "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that when he writes this last sentence he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organisation which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and today the Congress has accepted that philosophy, not as a creed, as it is to me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and the best thing for India, a nation of 350,000,000, to do.

Our Weapon

A NATION of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say 'no,' and that nation is to-day learning to say 'no,'

But what is it that that nation does? To summarily, or at all, dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is today to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India,

but I do want to transform that band. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it complete independence or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the same meaning. Hence, I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

Financial Cramp

THREE EXPERTS from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have, in their own way, each in his different manner, told out of their expert experiences how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 30 per cent of her resources are mortgaged irretrievably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown out of the amplitude of their knowledge what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that those safeguards must be

also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference.

I will agree with them all that we have, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never got down to brass tacks, as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining—to come to real grips and to get down to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points? Heaven knows, I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But

they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them.

They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problem and find a way out of those problems. But today you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that whilst I abate not a tittle of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi and a host of others can weave into being.

Mutual Trust

I WILL NOT be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at Delhi into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he represents. You distrust that organisation though you may seemingly trust me.

not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organisation to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organisation; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derived from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. Today you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organised terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands today who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writng on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Musalman also by contact good or evil with the Hindu has himself become mild. And that mention of the Musalman brings me to the baffling problem of Minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of Minorities being solved there is no Swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that I realise it; and yet I came here in the hope 'perchance' that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the Miniorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that so

long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will bo no living friendship between these communities.

It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth — do you suppose that all these will count for nothing ?

Were Hindus and Musalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there ? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Musalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Musalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian. He said: "If God" — "Allah" as he called God — "gives me life, I propose to write the history of Musalman rule in India; and then I will show, through documents that British people have preserved, that Aurengzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history; and so on. And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say, it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you

will find that Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I do not intend to say much tonight about the Princes, but I should be wronging them and should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore, I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remian undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

An Autonomous Frontier Province

LET INDIA GET what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, and whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy today. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore, the whole vote of the Congress will be

given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial Autonomy tomorrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from tomorrow the Fronrier Province becomes a full fledged autonomous province I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

Thanks

LAST OF ALL, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is perhaps the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knees before I take the final leap and final plunge.

But, whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then, let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement, which represents the poor people of the East End of London, I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to

me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection.

It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory, no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.

XII

AU REVOIR

PRIME MINISTER, and friends, the privilege and the responsibility of moving a vote of thanks to the Chair have been entrusted to me, and I have taken up the responsibility and the privilege with the greatest pleasure. A chairman who conducts the proceedings of his meeting in a becoming and courteous manner is always entitled to a vote of thanks, whether those who compose the meeting agree with the decisions taken at the meeting, or with the decisions that may be given by the chairman himself.

Sir, I know that yours was a double duty. You had not only to conduct the proceedings of the Conference with becoming dignity and with impartiality, but you had often to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government.

And your final act in the Chair has been to convey the considered decision of His Majesty's Government over the many matters on which this Conference has deliberated. I propose to omit that part of your task; but for me the pleasanter part is how you have conducted the proceedings, and let me congratulate you upon the lesson that you have given us so often in time sense. Chairmen often neglect that very elementary duty, and I must confess, in my country almost with triesome regularity. We are not

credited with proper time sense. Prime Minister, it will be my pleasant and bounden duty to give to my countrymen when I return to India what the British Prime Minister has done in the matter of time sense.

The other thing that you have shown us is your amazing industry. Brought up in your hardy Scotch climate, you have not known what rest is, and you have not allowed us also to know what rest is. With, shall I say, almost unexampled ferocity you worked everyone of us, including old men like my friend and revered brother Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and equally old man like me.

You have worked almost to exhaustion, with a pitilessness worthy of a Scotsman like you, my friend and revered leader Sastri. You let us know yesterday that you know his physical condition but before a sense of duty you set aside all these personal considerations. All honour to you for that and I shall treasure this amazing industry of yours.

But let me say on this matter that although I belong to a climate which is considered to be luxuriant, almost bordering on the equatorial regions, perhaps we might there be able to cross swords with you in industry; but that does not matter. If what you gave us yesterday, is only a foretaste of what you are capable of—working even for a full twentyfour hours as your House of Commons has done at times—well then, of course, you will take the palm.

At the Parting of the ways

THEREFORE I HAVE the greatest pleasure in moving this vote of thanks. But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps a greater reason, why I should shoulder this responsibility and esteem the privilege that has been given to me. It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely, because

I would like to study your declaration, once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning if there is a hidden meaning in it, crossing all the T's, dotting all the I's and if I then come to the conclusion as just now seems to be likely—that so far as I am concerned we have come to the parting of the ways.

That our ways take different directions, it does not matter to us. You are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us in this society of ours for all to agree in order to respect one another. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that there is no principle left with you, On the contrary, dignity of human nature requires that we must face the storms of life and sometimes, even blood brothers have got to go each his own way, but, if at the end of their quarrel—at the end of their differences—they can say that they bore no malice and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier—if it will be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and of my countrymen, and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well. I do not know in what direction my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart.

PART II

FROM OVER THE WAVES

I

IT WAS TOUCH and go till the very end, and no one would have believed that Gandhiji was sailing until he had actually embarked. The Simla correspondents of Anglo-Indian newspapers heaved a sigh of relief,—'the disturber of peace,' the inconvenient man, the troublesome person had left,—and they were also voicing the feelings of the official world. Eternal vigilance is a thing that no one in power can endure, whereas for Gandhiji eternal vigilance is the very breath of life. But let no one believe, that because Gandhiji will be absent for a few weeks, the vigilance is in any way going to be relaxed. The letter addressed to the Home Secretary on the 27th August which forms part of the Second Settlement, is nothing but a promise of vigilance on the part of the Congress, nothing but a public expression, on the part of Gandhiji, of the feeling that if he is going, he is going in fear and trembling as to what would happen in India.

Meghani's Message

There were numerous telegrams handed in to Gandhiji, as the steamship "Rajputana" left the Bombay harbour. There was one from H. E. the Viceroy. Many were from friends and co-workers, wishing him a happy voyage and happier return home, and promising that the flag would be kept flying during his absence. There were two which struck the right note. One said: 'May God illumine thy path.' The other said: 'You will win or lose greatly. May God help you to win.' But the one, that, according to Gandhiji himself, correctly and vividly described the situation he was in, was a farewell poem in Gujarati by our young poet Meghani. It is not possible to give in English its music and its soulful utterance. It is as though the spirit of the poet had been intimate witness of the innermost thoughts and feelings of Gandhiji during the past fifteen days, since the breakdown of the negotiations on the 13th of August. 'You have drunk many a bitter draught,' says the poet, 'Go forth now to finish the last cup of poison. You have pitted truth against falsehood, love against hate, straight dealing against deceit. You have refused to distrust even your bitterest enemy. Go forth then to quaff the bitterest draught that may yet be in store for you. Let not the thought of our misery and our misfortunes make you pause. [The Chittagong news is slowy coming through.] You have taught us to suffer cheerfully. You have stiffened our tender hearts into steel. What if you return empty-handed? Your very going will achieve good. Go and proclaim to mankind your message of love and brotherhood. Mankind ailing with untold ills is pining for the healing balm that, it knows, you will carry with you.

Our Luggage

GANDHIJI HAD wired to a friend to book five lowest class berths for us. The lowest class proved to be second, and so we found ourselves in the second saloon. But Gandhiji's eagle eye began to survey the contents of the cabins as soon he had time to look about him. Fortunately we were in the second saloon, but supposing we were travelling as deck passengers, how should we have managed with the waggon load of luggage we had with us? 'We had to get ready in the course of a few hours', was one of the explanations. 'We have borrowed all these suit cases, and we shall return them as soon as we get back home', was another. A third was, that numerous friends had simply flooded us with their superfluous belongings, and there was no help. Yet another explanation was, that we were ignorant and friends in the know had advised us to arm ourselves with certain things, and what we had was nothing more than they had asked us to carry.

The explanations made the case all the worse for us. They seemed to him to be special pleading, and he was exasperated. That the companions of the representative of the poorest in the land should go about with costly suit cases, — no matter whether they were gifts or loans,—cut him to the quick, and every one of us came in for his or her share of his scourging: "It is no good pleading want of time to prepare. No preparation was necessary. Rather than appropriate anything and everything that came, you might have told the friends, that you had no necessity for all the things they had offered, and you might have taken with you a few woollen and cotton pieces from Jerajani's Khadi Store. But you, absorbed all that came your way, as though you expected to stay

about five years in England! I have told you, that we could get there what we might want, and leave it for the poor when we returned. That you have promised to return all the suit cases does in no way mitigate the offence. I never expected, that you were going to keep them. But the fact that you did not hesitate to accept all these leather trunks gives me some idea of your conception of poverty and non-possession. You say some of these things are old and from the friends' superfluous lumber. You are either deceiving yourself or deceiving me. If they were superfluous, they should have thrown them away. They could not have given them to you, unless you told them that you needed them. That you proceeded on the advice of those who you think were in the know is absurd. If you took their advice, you should be with them. Here you are with me, and should go by my advice." And so on, and so forth for several days. Even if we found overselves to be exceptionally good sailors, this castigation was enough to make one giddy or sick. We next hit upon a second best, *viz.*, to make up an inventory of the things we should need and of those that we should not need, and to send the latter back from Aden. That then was our immediate job.

It was enough to absorb the first three days, and on the fourth we were ready to submit our lists for inspection. 'I am not now going to disturb your list, though I would like to see you going about in the streets of London as you do in Simla. If you can go about in Simla with a *dhoti* and a *kudta* and a pair of sandals, I assure you there is nothing to prevent you from doing so in England. If I found that you were not properly clad, I should myself warn you and get you more woollens. But you must wear or have with you nothing because of the imaginary fear that if you

did otherwise, the people there would be shocked. Rest assured, that the people there would be shocked to see swanky suit cases in your or my possession.' Pointing to a leather wallet that the manufacturing company had sent as a gift, he said: 'If you can do with a Khadi bag in India, why not in England? And you think people there carry about their papers in dainty wallets like these? By no means. You may perhaps find them in the hands of rich bankers or merchants in Lombard Street, or perhaps in the hands of statesmen carrying important state papers with them, but in your hands they would look ridiculous.' A binocular that a friend had insisted on giving us, shared naturally the same fate, when the simple criterion was applied, *viz.*, that we should have nothing which in the ordinary course we could never afford to have. But things like these afforded considerable amusement, and tempered Gandhiji's wrath. Some friend had kindly given a folding camp-cot of American make for Gandhiji's use on deck. 'Oh, is that a camp-cot? I thought it was a hockey set. Well, let the hockey set go. Have you ever seen me use it?' At this moment in came Shuaib Qureshi to relieve our agony, and immediately he said to Mr. Qureshi in refreshing good humour 'Well, Shuaib, if some of His Highness' party should need Kashmir shawls, let me know. From the number of shawls that friends have given me, I should be able to run a shop. The friend who gave me that costly shawl worth Rs. 700, a shawl so delicate in texture that it can pass through a ring, thought perhaps that I should wear it in the R. T. C. to show how well I represent the millions of India! Well, let Her Highness relieve me of this costly possession, and give me Rs. 7,000 for it for the use of the poor.

That is all that a sole representative of the poor can do.'

That the castigation was not undeserved is shown by the fact, that as a result of this clearance we rid ourselves of no less than seven suit cases and cabin trunks to be sent back from Aden.

Best Sailor

WE HAVE HAD a choppy sea, and many are not yet ready for anything like a serious talk or discussion with Gandhiji. He is perhaps the best sailor on board the s. s. Rajputana. He has selected for himself a corner on the second class deck where he spends most of the day and the whole of the night. 'You seem to have deliberately chosen this spot to scare us away,' said Birlaji the other day. 'It is an ordeal for us to be sitting here even for the few minutes when we have our prayers.'

Quite a large number of the Indian passengers have, however, begun to get over their sea-sickness with the result, that the dining saloons are now full, and there was an attendance of 22 at our evening prayer yesterday. Gandhiji has not allowed his routine to be disturbed in any way. He retires and rises at his usual hours and has put in practically the same amount of daily work as usual.

Ship Officers

I MUST SAY, that the behaviour of all the officers on the boat, not only towards Gandhiji but towards us, who tramp about the whole boat in Khadi *kudtas* and *dhotis* and Khadi caps, has been not only unexceptionable, but extra courteous. The colour prejudice and various racial distinctions, that you often hear the P. and O. Indian passengers complaining about, seem to be absent on this boat, during this voyage at any rate.

II

THE FIRST PORT of call, after a weary voyage of 1,660 miles in practically a straight line to the west of Bombay, is Aden. The city is a mass of volcanic rocks—the heart of the city even now bears the name of "Crater,"—and the passengers can see from the boat huge masses of bleak, cinder-like rocks which surround the city proper. It is said to have been held by many chiefs for centuries. It is described as a small fishing village with scarcely 600 souls in 1839 when it was captured. The story of the capture would be of considerable interest, if genuine details were available, and would perhaps add one to the several nineteenth century exploits of the imperialist depredator. The British schoolboy is of course taught, that the Sultan of Lahej, who had agreed to cede Aden for an annual payment, went back on his agreement, and attacked and plundered a British ship, with the result that the fortifications had to be attacked, and they were stormed in January 1839. The fact of the matter is however this, that the security of the Red Sea,—one of the greatest highways of the world—had to be maintained, and could not be done otherwise than by maintaining a strong force at Aden and at Perim, an island a hundred miles farther west from Aden, which is so strongly guarded that no one may stay there without the permission of the Resident at Aden.

Aden

Aden has now a population of 53,000, out of which 31,000 are Arabs, 6,500 are Somalis, and no less than

5,500 Indians of whom the majority are Gujaratis and Cutchis from Bombay. It has been under Bombay Government all these 92 years, but there is now a proposal for its transfer to the Government of India. This transfer is opposed by the Aden Indians for obvious reasons. Most of the residents are from Bombay and have business connections in Bombay. If Bombay becomes autonomous,—as it it bound to now —Aden should not be deprived of the advantage. There is another reason too, *viz*, that if Aden is transferred to the Central Government, it will very likely be a sort of regulation district or a semi-military area, and all public life would be killed.

The Flag

THE INDIANS wanted to welcome Gandhiji and the other delegates to the R. T. C., but the Resident would not allow it if they insisted on having the national flag there. They could not assert themselves until Gandhiji himself suggested to Mr. Framroz Cowasji Dinshaw; the President of the Reception Committee, that he should phone to the Resident, tell him that he could not think of receiving an address under those conditions, that there was a truce between the Government of India and the Congress, and the Government must not resent the flag, if only under the truce. The argument went home, and the Resident saved an ugly situation by consenting to the Indian National flag flying at the place where Gandhiji received the citizens' address.

Another fact which I noticed was, that whilst the question of transfer has been on the *tapis* for some time, there was no reference to it at all in the address of welcome presented to Gandhiji. I can attribute it to nothing but fear of the authorities. There are,

however, some youths who have borne to Aden some sparks of the Congress fire at Bombay, and thanks to the Gujaratis who are evidently keeping themselves in touch with the movement, there was quite a lot of white coarse cloth to be seen,—whether it was all genuine hand-spun, I cannot say.

The situation gave Gandhiji the opportunity of delivering the messsage of the Congress, and the fact that the Arabs had taken part in organising the reception,—the address of the welcome was read both in Gujarati and Arabic,—afforded him an occasion to give a message to the Arabs also.

Replying to the address, and thanking them for the purse of 328 guineas that was presented to him, Gandhiji said:

"I thank you for the honour you have done me. I know, that the honour is not meant for me personally or for my friends. It is an honour done to the Congress whom I hope to be able to represent at the Round Table Conference. I came to know, that there was a hitch in your proceedings on account of the National flag. Now it is inconceivable for me to find a meeting of Indians, especially where national leaders are invited, without the National flag flying there. You know that many people sustained *lathi* blows and some have lost their lives in defending the honour of the flag, and you cannot honour an Indian leader without honouring the India national flag. Again there is a settlement between the Government and the Congress, which is no longer to the Government a hostile party but a friendly party. It is not enough, therefore, to tolerate or permit the Congress flag, but it must be given the place of honour where Congress representatives are invited.

"ON BEHALF OF THE Congress I give you the assurance that, the Congress does not stand merely for isolated independence, which may easily become a menace to the world. The Congress with its creed of truth and non-violence cannot possibly be a menace to the world. It is my conviction, that India, numbering one-fifth of the human race, becoming free through non-violence and truth, can be a great force of service to the whole of mankind. On the contrary India having no voice in her affairs is today a menace. It is a helpless India exciting the jealousy and greed of other countries which must live by exploiting her. But when India refuses to be exploited and is well able to take care of herself, and achieves that freedom through non-violence and truth, she will be a force for peace and make for peaceful atmosphere in this troubled globe of ours.

India and World-Peace

"It was therefore natural, that the Arabs and others joined the Indians in organising this function. All who desire peace must join together to perpetuate peace. This great peninsula, the brithplace of Mahomed and of Islam, can help to solve the Hindu-Moslem problem. It is a matter of shame to me to confess, that we are a house divided against itself. We fly at each other's throats in cowardice and fear. The Hindu distrusts the Musalman through cowardice and fear, and the Musalman distrusts the Hindu through equal cowardice and imaginary fears. Islam throughout history has stood for matchless bravery and peace. It can, therefore, be no matter for pride to the Musalmans, that they should fear the Hindus. Similarly,

A Message to the Arabs

it can be no matter for pride to the Hindu that they should fear Musalmans, even if they are aided by the Musalmans of the world. Are we so fallen, that we should be afraid of our own shadows? You will be glad to hear that the Pathans are living in peace with us. They stood side by side with us in the last struggle, and sacrificed their young men on the altar of liberty. I want you, who belong to the country of the Prophet's birth, to make your contribution to the restoration of peace between Hindus and Muslims in India. I cannot tell you how you are to do it, but, I may remind you, that where there is a will, there is a way. I want the Arabs of Arabia to come to our rescue and help, to bring about a condition of things when the Musalman will consider it a point of honour to help the Hindu and *vice versa*.

"For the rest I would also give you the message of spinning and weaving in your homes. Some of the Caliphs led lives which were models of simplicity, and if you help yourself by making your own cloth, there is in it nothing derogatory to Islam. There is also the problem of drink which for you should be twice cursed. There should be not a drop here, but as there are other communities too, I think the Arabs will have to persuade them to make Aden dry. I do hope our relations with one another will now grow richer and closer."

Greetings on the Way

EVEN THOUGH you may be in mid-ocean, you do not lose contact with the outside world. You not only have marconi messages from shore to ship, but from ship to ship, and within three days of sailing from Bombay we had an agreeable surprise in the shape

of numerous marconigram greetings from friends. There were greetings from the Indian passengers on board the ship the 'City of Baroda' and several messages from the ship 'Cracovia.' There were also messages from Karachi, and some more from Bombay. A particularly welcome surprise was one from the Indians of Berbera. For a while we wondered if Berbera was not another ship like the others that had flashed greetings to us. But I found at last, that Berbera is the principal town of British Somaliland on the south shore of the Gulf of Aden, which has been a protectorate since 1884.

AND NOW AS we are nearing the Suez, we have messages every few hours from Indians and Egyptians in Cairo, the most noteworthy being from Madame Zagloul Pasha: "On happy occasion crossing Egyptian waters I send great leader of great India my heartiest compliments and best wishes success Indian cause." I may also copy here a marconigram from *Al Balagh*, the leading Egyptian journal, "*Al Balagh* newspaper Cairo greets India in your person, wishes full success for Indian cause in Conference."

Madame Zagloul

Among the friends on board the ship, the best were the little boys and girls of the home-going English passengers. Children know neither sex nor colour, and the commonest phenomenon on our ship is of Gandhiji often pulling the children by the ears, patting them on the back, and the latter putting in their little heads into Gandhiji's cabin, when Gandhiji sits down to breakfast or dinner. "Grapes or dates?" is the usual question put to them, and gleefully they bear away the plate of grapes soon to return it empty. I have seen them watching the revolutions of the spinning

wheel for minutes on end in pleasant wonder. But I hope to say more of these friends on another occasion.

The Wheel

GANDHIJI'S WHEEL has been a universal centre of attraction. It is amazing how though they wear clothes all their lives, men and women know so little of cotton or spinning or weaving. Amusing questions are asked as Gandhiji and Miraben sit plying their wheels on deck. But it is not only cursory interest that the wheel has aroused. Numerous questions relating to the economics of spinning and the place of the wheel in this industrialised world of ours are asked by the Indian youths on board, proceeding to England for higher studies. Their ignorance is remarkable looking to the fact that the spinning wheel has been before the people for some years now.

On Prayer

THE MORNING prayers are too early for others to join us, but practically all Indians, (who number over 42), —Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, Sikhs, —and a sprinkling of Europeans attend the evening prayers. At the request of some of these friends a fifteen minutes' talk after prayer has become a daily feature. A question is asked each evening, and Gandhiji replies to it the next. One of the Indian passengers—a Musalman youth—asked Gandhiji to give his personal testimony on prayer, not a theoretical discourse but a narration of what he had felt and experienced as a result of prayer. Gandhiji liked the question immensely, and poured out his personal testimony from a full heart. "Prayer," said he, "has been the saving of my life. Without it I should have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you, that I have had

my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer. Now I may tell you, that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And as time went on my faith in God increased, and the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it. I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in prayer. They supplicated God, but I could not do so, I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage I felt that as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer-starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer. Three of the greatest teachers of the world—Buddha, Jesus, and Mahomed,—have left unimpeachable testimony, that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it. But to come nearer home. Millions of Hindus and Musalmans and Christians find their only solace in life in prayer. Either you vote them down as liars or self-deluded people. Well, then, I will say, that this lying has a charm for me, a truth-seeker, if that mainstay or staff of life, without which I could not bear to live for a moment is to be called a lie. In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact I have found people who envy my peace. That

peace, I tell you, comes from prayer, I am not a man of learning but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Every one is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trodden by the ancient teachers. I have given my personal testimony. Let every one try and find, that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life."

'But,' said another youth the next evening, 'sir, whilst you start with belief in God, we start with unbelief. How are we to pray?'

"Well" said Gandhiji, "it is beyond my power to induce in you a belief in God. There are some things which are self-proved, and some which are not proved at all. The existence of God is like a geometrical axiom. It may be beyond our heartgrasp. I shall not talk of an intellectual grasp. Intellectual attempts are more or less failures, as a rational explanation cannot give you the faith in a living God. For it is a thing beyond the grasp of reason. It transcends reason. There are numerous phenomena from which you can reason out the existence of God, but I shall not insult your intelligence by offering you a rational explanation of that type. I would have you brush aside all rational explanations and begin with a simple childlike faith in God. If I exist, God exists. With me it is a necessity of my being as it is with millions. They may not be able to talk about it, but from their life you can see that it is part of their life. I am only asking you to restore the belief that has been undermined. In order to do so, you have to unlearn a lot that dazzles your intelligence and throws you off your feet. Start with the faith which is also a token of humility and an admission that we know nothing, that we are

less than atoms in this universe. We are less than atoms, I say, because the atom obeys the law of its being, whereas we in the insolence of our ignorance deny the law of nature. But I have no intellectual argument to address to those who have no faith.

"Once you accept the existence of God, the necessity for prayer is unescapable. Let us not make the astounding claim, that our whole life is a prayer, and therefore we need not sit down at a particular hour to pray. Even men who were all their time in tune with the Infinite did not make such a claim. Their lives were a continuous prayer, and yet for our sake, let us say, they offered prayer at set hours, and renewed each day the oath of loyalty to God. God of course never insists on the oath, but we must renew our pledge every day, and I assure you we shall then be free from every imaginable misery in life."

We have done 1,200 more miles north through the Red Sea, and are nearing the Suez.

From Nahas Pasha

THE FOLLOWING warm message of greetings was received from Nahas Pasha, President of the Wafd party — the party now in opposition and fighting for Egyptian independence for which Zagloul Pasha fought and died:

"The great Leader Al Mahatma Gandhi

'Rajputana'

"In the name of Egypt who is now fighting for its liberties and its independence, I welcome in you the foremost leader of that India which is also struggling to attain the same end, and I convey to you my hearty wishes for a safe journey and a happy return. I also ask God to grant to you success in your quest—a success equal to the

greatness of your determination. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you on your homeward journey, and trust that the land of the Pharaohs will then be favoured by your visit, thus enabling the Wafd and the Egyptian Nation at large to express to you, whatever be the result of your journey, both their appreciation of your noble achievements to promote the welfare of your country, and their reverence for the greatness of the sacrifice made by you in support of your principles. May God prolong your life, and crown your endeavours with a victory far-reaching and abiding. Our representatives both at Suez and at Port Said will have the honour of conveying to you by word of mouth our welcome and our best wishes. Mustafa El Nahas Pasha, President of the Wafd."

Madame Zagloul's touching message and *Al Balagh's* hearty greetings, and Nahas Pasha's marconigram to crown both, form a triple message for us to treasure.

III

Within a few hours after entering the Gulf of Suez our boat passed a number of light-houses showing how difficult in old times the navigation through these waters must have been. The southern part of the Gulf is studded with reefs and islands. As you go further up you descry the mountain masses of Sinai. Some few miles distant may also be seen the palm trees of the green oasis where Moses and the Israelites celebrated their deliverance from the hosts of Pharaoh after crossing the Red Sea. Every spot and hill on the east coast of the Gulf of Suez

conceals a storied past, like the sacred spots in our own country. The hills on the east coast of the Red Sea are bleak and rugged, making one wonder how from these regions sprang three of the great faiths of the world—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. When one thinks of the common origin of these faiths, and reflects that all the great faiths of the world sprang from the sacred soil of Asia, one feels ashamed and humiliated that the puny followers of those faiths today can so far forget their great originators and the Almighty God who gave them illumination that they can find therein nothing to unify and everything to separate themselves from one another as surely as from the Great Father.

Suez

THE RED SEA was a great trade route throughout the middle ages, until Vasco De Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and opened a safer and more economic highway. But the opening up of Suez restored the Red Sea to its premier position of one of the greatest highways of the world. The Suez Canal was the work of the Great French Engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, whose imposing statue, in appropriately sea-green colour, on the breakwater at the entrance of the Mediterranean, attracts the eye of every traveller. The Canal, which took over ten years to construct, cost £. 297,25,000 to the Suez Canal Company, half of the capital being raised in France and half by the Khedive. But the opening up of the Canal in 1869, whetted British Imperialist ambitions. It was regarded as vital to the sea communications with India, and indeed the maintenance of British rule in India seemed more or less bound up with the British hold on the Suez Canal. How was this hold to be obtained

and the fruit of the French engineer's labours to be reaped by Britain? The Khedive's shares offered the way. It was a favourite device resorted to successfully by rival imperialist interests in North Africa during those days, to induce the native chiefs to borrow freely from the foreign powers and to make them heavily indebted. That is how France seized Tunis. The Khedive of Egypt too had thus been induced to run up nearly a 100 million pounds of debt—mainly to the English and the French—and his credit sank so low that there was nothing for it but to sell all his shares in the Suez Canal Company. The year 1874 marked the end of the anti-imperialist policy in England, and Disraeli bought for Great Britain all the Khedive's 176,602 shares for £. 3,680,000. This narration of the bare details of this transaction is enough. What followed Ismail Pash's enforced bankruptcy would land us into the secret history of Egyptian occupation which is far out of the way for our present purpose. Suffice it to say that these shares were valued in 1927 at nine times their original price. Nearly 60 per cent of the navigation through this canal is said to be under the British flag.

Independent Egypt

I HAVE ALREADY made mention of the warm messages of greetings and good wishes from Madame Zagloul Pasha and from Mustafa Nahas Pasha, the President of the Wafd. A number of Egyptian press correspondents saw Gandhiji on board the ship and a representative of Nahas Pasha met Gandhiji both at Suez and Port Said. A deputations of Indian merchants in Cairo, mostly Sindhis, waited on Gandhiji both at Suez and Port Said, and gave him an address of

welcome and pressed him to pay a visit to Cairo on the return journey. I learnt definitely at Port Said that though no exception had been taken to this Indian deputation waiting on Gandhiji the authorities were against granting permission to Egyptian deputations and it was with great difficulty that a single rspresentative of Nahas Pasha could get the permission.

In this connection, a brief resume of the present conditions in Egypt would not be out of place. I do not claim to have made a study of them, but I have had now the advantage of long talks with Egyptians and have a fair idea of what they have passed through. The methods of the despot are everywhere the same, so much so that if you knew the general outline you could easily fill in the details. No one, I suppose, is under the delusion that Egypt is enjoying real independence, but I was not prepared for all that I heard.

With an Egyptian King and Egyptian Prime Minister, Egypt is no more independent than India is. Zagloul Pasha created the institution known as the Wafd Misri—Body of Representatives of Egypt—of which the President now is Nahas Pasha, who was formerly Zagloul's private secretary and for a brief interval Prime Minister. But the British Government could not brook the aspirations of the Wafd and soon found in King Faud and Sidki Pasha ready tools. Nahas Pasha failed in his conferences with the British Cabinet, King Faud suspended the Parliament and made Sidki Pasha virtual dictator. This resulted in a wholesale boycott of last year's election and a general strike followed by, what the Egyptians characterise as, three "massacres." I had no means to test the accuracy of the details given to me, but I was told

that when the men in the Railway Workshop laid down tools and, cried "Victory to the Wafd", they were fired upon by the soldiers. "Were the workers absolutely non-violent?" I asked. "They had no arms", said the friend I was interviewing, "but they threw pieces of iron at the soldiers who killed 70 and wounded nearly a thousand. These wounded, whilst in hospital, were kept under strict military guard, and when discharged were converted into undertrial prisoners and tried for political demonstrations against Government. The present assembly is a packed body of Government creatures, and the administration is in the hands of Sidki Pasha's men." "What about the press?" I asked, and I heard practically the same story as we are familiar with in India—perhaps much worse. "The Police are posted at our presses, the first proof copy has to be shown to them and they suppress the issue if they think it contains objectionable matter." "What about the students? What about the masses?" I asked. "The students are all with us. The women under Madame Zagloul, who is called the Mother of the Egyptians, are also astir, and what is known as the Moderate or the Liberal Party, which used to attack and criticise the Wafd, is now supporting the Wafd. Mahomed Mahmud Pasha, the President of the party, was belaboured during one of the disturbances and he has since been a staunch supporter of the Wafd." Indeed among the many telegrams that were received at Port Said was one from Mahomed Mahmud Pasha and also from Cherifa Riaz Pasha, the President of the Women's Saadist Committee. In spite of the strong press censorship, I may say that no less than twelve Egyptian papers—three of them with a daily circulation of 40 to 50 thousand—had special articles

on Gandhiji, two issued special numbers, and all reproduced the telegrams and marconigrams sent to Gandhiji by Nahas Pasha, Madame Zagloul Pasha, Mahomed Mahmud Pasha and others.

No wonder Egypt is as impatient of the British yoke as we are, and wants Gandhiji to visit Egypt on his return. Everyone asked for a message from Gandhiji or from India to her "Younger sister Egypt", and Gandhiji expressed, in everyone of the messages he gave, his best wishes for the great country, the key note of all of them being how good it would be if Egypt took up the message of non-violence. To an English journalist who saw him at Suez, he said in reply to a question: "I would heartily welcome the union of East and West provided it is not based on brute force."

The Law of Love

THE TALKS after the evening prayer have all been about non-violence, and the Egyptian friends who boarded the ship at Suez had an opportunity of listening to one such discourse.

"Consciously or unconsiously we are acting non-violently towards one another in daily life," said Gandhiji one evening. "All well ordered societies are based on the law of non-violence. I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have to work it out in daily life. Wherever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In a crude manner I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are

solved. I have found, however, that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done. In India we have had an ocular demonstration of the operation of this law on the widest scale possible. I do not claim that non-violence has penetrated the three hundred millions, but I do claim that it has penetrated deeper than any other message, and in an incredibly short time. We have not been all uniformly non-violent; and with the vast majority, non-violence has been a matter of policy. Even so, I want you to find out if the country has not made phenomenal progress under the protecting power of non-violence."

In reply to another questioner he said: "It takes a fairly strenuous course of training to attain to a mental state of non-violence. In daily life it has to be a course of discipline though one may not like it, like for instance the life of a soldier. But I agree that, unless there is a hearty co-operation of the mind, the mere outward observance will be simply a mask, harmful both to the man himself and to others. The perfect state is reached only when mind and body and speech are in proper co-ordination. But it is always a case of intense mental struggle. It is not that I am incapable of anger, for instance, but I succeed on almost all occasions to keep my feelings under control. Whatever may be the result, there is always in me a conscious struggle for following the law of non-violence deliberately and ceaselessly. Such a struggle leaves one stronger for it. Non-violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contradictory terms. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with the self and ultimately gains a mastery

over all other feelings. My daily experience, as of those who are working with me, is that every problem lends itself to solution if we are determined to make the law of truth and non-violence the law of life. For truth and non-violence, are to me, faces of the same coin.

"The law of love will work, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or no. Just as a scientist will work wonders out of various applications of the laws of nature, even so a man who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work greater wonders. For the force of non-violence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the material forces of nature, like for instance electricity. The men who discovered for us the law of love were greater scientists than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for every one to see all its working. Such, at any rate, is the hallucination, if it is one, under which I am labouring. The more I work at this law the more I feel delight in life, delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that I have no power to describe."

Crete

THE FIRST PIECE of land you sight after leaving Port Said is the mountainous Southern Coast of the island of Crete which, in ancient times, was the seat of the Phenoecian civilisation. The island is said to be most fertile and to enjoy a salubrious climate. The sea continued to be slightly choppy until we neared the Coast of Italy. The town of Suez looked quite pretty from the green sea and the uniform French officers' houses on the west bank of the Canal

presented at night a picturesque appearance, but it was nothing compared to the vast canvas painted by Nature in the Gulf of Messina. The sea, which had now changed to deep blue, was like a placid lake on which our big ship quickly glided away. Within a mile or two of us on our right we saw the beautiful mountains of Italy, not bleak and dreary, like the ones we came across up to now, but green with cypresses and olives and studded with pretty towns within easy distances—the ancient town of Reggio being the first European town we saw in clear bright outline. Opposite is Messina, perhaps prettier, and as the boat is delivered out, so to say, from the gulf one wishes as though one could linger for a while in these scenes of beauty. But as we go on the sea gets more placid still, so much so that in the distance you can descry a ship going full sail beautifully reflected in the water and reminding one of the "painted ship upon a painted ocean."

I wonder if Gandhiji knew, when he said that life persists in the midst of destruction, that he was giving an epigram of which the converse already existed in the saying: "In the midst of life we are in death." Almost as if to prove this, we see rising up before us the island of Stromboli, sitting right in the midst of the sea like a huge mastodon. It is a live volcano and when not crested with thick clouds, as it was when we passed it, is said to shoot sheets of flames and molten rock. Quite conscious of the fact that the eruption may some day be more fearfully copious than usual and submerge them all in hot lava, pretty little villages nestle at the foot of the volcano. Bumper crops are raised from the soil enriched by the lava which, whilst it destroys also creates. Truly in the midst of destruction life persists.

Even so, in the midst of despair hope persists, and in that hope we expect to reach Marseilles tomorrow and London the day after, having again had some charming scenery as we passed this afternoon through the Strait of Bonifacio which divides Sardinia from Corsica, the island of Napolean's birth.

EPISTLES FROM LONDON

I

WHEN OUR boat cast anchor at Marseilles the very first to welcome Gandhiji on European soil was Mademoiselle Madeleine Rolland, the sister of one of the greatest sons of France, who is living in voluntary exile from his country because of his devotion to truth and non-violence. M. Rolland had made a desperate attempt to come himself, but his health had prevented him and he had to content himself with sending an affectionate message through his sister. With her came M. Privat and his good wife, the Swiss friends who are living in close association with M. Rolland, and who have done a great deal to spread the message of truth and non-violence. Non-violence in national affairs is a force newly discovered, and even as a scientist would describe the workings and applications of a new law M. Privat described the workings and possibilities of the law of love and showed Gandhiji his new book *Le Choc De Patriotismes* (The Clash of Patriotisms), describing various experiments in the

At Marseilles

field and introducing some of the new experiments in the field. One of these was Ceresole, the great Swiss pacifist, who is trying to fight militarism by organising great works of relief in areas stricken with war or other calamities, and who is at present engaged in giving relief to the miners in Wales. "You must seek him out," said M. Privat to me, "for he is too modest to thrust himself on Gandhiji."

To the Students

IF THE FIRST friends to give us welcome were Mademoiselle Rolland and M. Privat, the first strangers to do so were the students of France—members of the general association of the present and past students of Marseilles—who had organised a reception in honour of the "spiritual ambassador of India." They welcomed him as one bringing light to the exploitation-blinded West and healing balm to war-weary Europe. In his reply Gandhiji addressed them as friends and fellow students. "Since I visited France as a student to see the Exhibition held at Paris in 1890 some greater and more permanent links between you and me have been formed. The forger of those links is your own distinguished countryman, Romain Rolland, who constituted himself an interpreter of the humble message that I have been trying to deliver to my countrymen for the last 30 years or more. I have learnt something of the traditions of your country, and of the teachings of Rousseau and Victor Hugo and on my entering upon my mission—very difficult mission in London—it heartens me to find a welcome from you fellow students."

He expounded the message of non-violence to the youths belonging to a martial race. As he explained that non-violence is no weapon of the weak

but of the strongest, that strength does not mean mere strength of muscle, and that to a non-violent man strength of muscle is not necesary but possession of a strong heart is an absolute necessity, they cheered him most enthusiastically. He explained by taking the example of the muscular Zulu quaking before a European boy holding a revolver in his hand and contrasting him with the women of India who stood *lathi* blows and *lathi* charges without quaking. To kill and to be killed in fighting an enemy are acts of bravery but to stand the blows of your adversaries and not to retaliate is a greater form of bravery, and that is precisely what India has been training herself for. He concluded by touching on another aspect of the same question. This struggle through non-violence can be otherwise described as a process of purification, the underlying idea being that a nation loses its liberty owing to some of its own weaknesses and we find that immediately we shed our weaknesses, we regain our liberty. No people on earth can be finally subjected without their co-operation voluntary or involuntary. It is involuntary co-operation when for fear of some physical hurt you submit to a tyrant or a despot. I made the discovery at an early stage of the movement that for success in such a movement character must be the foundation. We also found that real education consisted not in packing the brain with facts and figures, not in passing examinations by reading numerous books, but in developing character. I do not know to what extent you students of France lay stress upon character rather than upon intellectual studies, but I can say this that if you explore the possibilites of non-violence you will find that without character it will prove a profitless study. I

hope that the meeting will not be the beginning and end of our acquaintance. I hope that this acquaintance will be the beginning of a living contact between you and my countrymen. In a movement, such as we are conducting in India, we need the intellectual sympathy of the whole world, and if after a careful study of the movement and means employed by us to attain our freedom, you feel that we deserve your sympathy and support I hope you will not fail to extend that sympathy."

Pressmen

CERTAIN THINGS bear a remarkable family likeness, no matter where they may be; one instance is C. I. D. police; another is that of industrial towns; a third instance is that of propagandist newspaper-men. I thought that when one left the shores of India one had bidden good bye to the mendacious propaganda one has got accustomed to associate with the Anglo-Indian Press. No fear. The Die-hard Tory press in England can beat any press in the world—the die-hards in our country are but feeble imitators of their *confreres* in this country—and we encountered a notorious instance in the representative of the *Daily Mail* who interviewed Gandhiji on board the "Rajputana." He was present at the reception given by the students, and sent off telegrams to his newspapers most mischievously misrepresenting what Gandhiji had said and in parts full of lies. In the special train taking us to Boulogne from Marseilles Gandhiji gave this friend a stern lecture. He had represented that the reception was by rebellious Indian students. It was entirely organised by the students of Marseilles. Without caring to print a single relevant extract from the speech he had

said Gandhiji propagated hatred to British rule! He was asked to point out a single phrase or sentence in corroboration of his statement. "I was surprised that you brought in politics" he continued to repeat feebly in self-defence. "You must understand" said Gandhiji "that I cannot isolate politics from the deepest things of my life, for the simple reason that my politics are not corrupt, they are inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth. As I have said often enough I would far rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth." Then there were vague insinuations which again he could not substantiate. Poor man! He had not expected that he would be thus called to account. "Mr.— you are perambulating round the suburbs of veracity." Crowds had lined even the streets of Marseilles, to our great surprise; as Gandhiji was taken to the meeting place. But the Daily Mail friend reported that "Gandhi was disappointed at the poor reception." "How did you know that I was disappointed? And how do you say that the gift from a British Colonel of a woman's corset annoyed me, when I said that I was amused? He said, "Amusement perhaps meant annoyance." "Well, then I may tell you that I have a sense of humour which saves me from annoyance over these things. If I was lacking in it, I should have gone mad by now. For instance, I should go mad over this article of yours. It is up to me to say that you have packed this article with things which are far from truth and I should have nothing to do with you. But I do not do so and would continue to give you an interview as often as you came." He seemed to squirm under the trouncing but by no means repentant.

But truth seems to be a very unwelcome guest in the journalistic sanctum and even reputed journalists, with no inclination to misrepresent, love to 'embroider' the truth. For instance, Mr. Mills, the American Associated Press correspondent, who has been with us for a long time, who knows Gandhiji's dislikes, could not do without emdroidering the truth about his life on the boat. He described the prayer scenes, the attraction of the spinning wheel and many other things but felt that the picture would be devoid of "colour" without a cat in it to share Gandhiji's milk every evening! Even so Mr. Slocombe, who made a name by publishing that thrilling account of his interview with Gandhiji in Yaravada Jail, wrote in the Evening Standard eulogising Gandhiji's generosity and felt that the picture would be incomplete without a concrete instance. He drew upon his imagination and represented Gandhiji as prostrating himself before the Prince of Wales when he came to India! "well Mr. Slocombe, I should have expected you to know better. This does not do credit to your imagination even," said Gandhiji. "I would bend the knee before the poorest scavenger, the poorest untouchable in India, for having participated in crushing him for centuries, I would even take the dust off his feet. But I would not prostrate myself, not even before the King, much less before the Prince of Wales for the simple reason that he represented insolent might. I may allow myself to be crushed by an elephant but not prostrate myself before him, but should prostrate myself before an ant for having even unconciously trodden upon it." Well may the *Irish Press*, De Valera's paper, started a few days ago, have as its motto, 'Truth in the News,' and declare in its very first issue: "We shall never consciously

use this journal to mislead our friends or to misrepresent those who oppose us." The newspaper which are faithful to this motto are very few indeed.

In London

BUT IT would be wrong to judge the people from the newspapers, though in a country where the circulation of newspapers is counted in millions of copies, one can imagine what incalculable harm they can produce. The public reception at the "Friends' House" was most happily conceived. All branches of public life were represented at the meeting to welcome the "guest of the nation" to use the words of Mr. Lawrence Housman, than whom a happier choice of chairman could not have been made. He at once gave assurance of something deeper than a "grateful welcome" *viz.*, of growing goodwill towards India, goodwill unchangeable irrespective of the results of the Conference. He struck the right note when he described Gandhiji as the instrument of something which is not generally understood—unification of politics and religion. "In churches we are all sinners, but in politics every one else is a sinner—that is a correct description of our daily life," said Mr. Housman, "and Mr. Gandhi has come to call upon us to search our hearts and to declare what our religion is."

Kingsley Hall

BUT THE WARMTH of private reception was even greater. What, for instance, can be more affectionate than the insistence of Miss Mureil Lester, our host, on Gandhiji's staying with her in Kingsley Hall, at Bow? Every one should know the story of "Kingsley Hall". How Miss Lester, in answer to the interrogatives of a lacerated heart decided to go and live in the

midst of noisy public houses and misery, squalor, want and sin, how she planned a visit to India and shared the hospitality of Dr. Tagore and Gandhiji, how kingsley Hall was opened and how she settled there with a few comrades to bring help and comfort and joy in the localities where dramas like the submerging of a family's fortunes, the abortive efforts to get work, the attempt at suicide, the subsequent humiliation and despair are every day being enacted, is a thrilling story told in the page of Miss. Lester's book *My Host the Hindu.* It was in the fitness of things that Gandhiji, the representative of the toiling millions of India, should be invited here and that he should find it a *milieu* absolutely after his heart. The members of the settlement do their own cleaning, cooking, washing etc. and every one who accepts their hospitality is expected to help in the daily bread-labour. I have not had the privilege of meeting Jane Addams or of seeing Hull House, but I have read a good deal about both and perhaps Miss Lester's endeavour is to do nothing less than have a "Hull House" in London, It is her ambition to see Kingsley Hall "shot through and through, permeated and pervaded with the spirit of God—the spirit which impels one to service, self-discipline and personal sacrifice." It is possible that exigencies of the work which has brought Gandhiji here may compel him to move for the convenience of friends, to more accessible quarters, but it is not difficult to imagine what a wrench it will be. Hundreds of men, women and children living in the locality surround the place in order to have a glimpse of Gandhiji and to wave him good cheer. The children merrily follow us when we go out, trying to make friends with us. "Well tell us when your father is going to see the King of England" is

the question that has often been put to Devdas. "Are boys quite like us in your country?" is another question. "These people look quite strange in their clothes," says a girl to her neighbour who cleverly replies, "As we look strange to them." "Your father goes in a car, does not he give you one?" is the naive inquiry of an urchin, whilst a mischievous one shouts from a distance. "Tell me where's your trousers?"

Friendliness

BUT THE friendiness of it all is unmistakable. Even the hostile press has, inspite of itself, advertised the "Mahatma" by publishing numerous portraits of him. The truckdriver, the labourer on the roads, the flowerseller on the pavement and the meatseller in his shops, spots "Gandhiji" right enough the moment his car stops, obstructed by the amazing London traffic, draws near respectfully or smiles affectionately.

Scores of letters come to Gandhiji daily from all parts of Great Britain and the Continent giving him a welcome and expressing sympathy for his mission. Old friends who knew him years ago as a young student have turned up to see him and all the English friends, including Civil Servants, who have known him, have made a point of renewing the friendship. "I owe a debt of gratitude to him," said Sir George Burnes the other day as he came to see him and was content simply to shake hand. Numerous are the invitations to spend a quiet week-end at country places for rest and quiet and some expressions of sympathy have taken concrete shape. Here is a letter enclosing a £ 50 cheque: "I have read with the greatest interest in the *Times* this morning the address you delivered on

Saturday at the Friends' Meeting House in Euston Road and the broadcast message to New York from Kingsley Hall. The teaching in both is so sound and comprehensive that I much hope that listeners in all parts of the world will understand and respond. My interest in India is of long standing. I had the privilege during the War of entertaining many of the soldiers and doctors interned in the hospital here. It will give me much pleasure if you will accept the enclosed cheque as a practical expression of sympathy with you and your teaching. Please put it to any part of your work you think best. I much hope that your presence at the Conference will facilitate the work and that you will not suffer from our climate." Here is an extract from one of the numerous letters received from Lancashire: "May I say or need I say that I, as a Lancashire Cotton working man, who is to some extent suffering through the action of the Indian Congress leaders, have a profound admiration for Mr. Gandhi and a great many of my fellow workers in Lancashire share that spirit of admiration for Mr. Gandhi." Here is a longer one which coming as it does from a workingman is a most welcome testimony to the fact that understanding of the Gandhian movement for truth and non-violence or for self-purification (to use a single word) has penetrated even Lancashire: "God has chosen you to be His leader, not only for the drink-ridden Indians, who have been cruelly treated by our infamous drink traffic, but you are by far our greatest leader and the greatest Christian, for all others are beaten with the liquor devils. I am a red hot prohibitionist and if you ever come to Rochdale you will find that I generally have a few minutes, after any kind of meeting, showing that prohibition is by far the greatest remedy and that Mr. Gandhi is the only

person with a real principle and who dares everywhere to keep the flag at the top. In fact some say now, as I near a gathering, 'Hello, Gandhi's 'pal' coming again' but I can assure you that I am not fit to loose your shoes. I pray that you will be the means in His hands of showing our drink-ridden nation that all these thousands of drink-hells (pubs) are kept going by the cotton and other workers who are fetching the wages out of the mills into the pubs and then wanting our brother Indians to purchase our goods and keep their country going as well while we boose, boose, and boose again!! In conclusion I pray again that God will be with you and your son and your dear comrades and that England will have to thank God for your efforts to stop this cursed traffic here and then your home land will start to live and we shall all sing together, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'

Numerous friends have sent books with their letters of welcome but I shall note here just two instances. Mr. Brailsford, whom all English educated Indians now know, sent a copy of his *Rebel India* and offered to show me English villages as I had shown him ours. The book which, unlike the productions of other journalists, is full of telling facts and daring statements none of which Mr. Brailsford is unable to prove and is published at this juncture, to strengthen the case of Rebel India trying to get free from the British Yoke. A greater agreeable surprise we come across in the shape of a book sent by Brigadier General Crozier, *A Word to Gandhi* with a note to Miss Lester that "Mr. Gandhi will be surprised to find in a military man an admirer of his." The book is full of things which would make one's blood freeze in one's veins for which the author holds the British

Government responsible. It will be remembered that he had to resign his position in Ireland when he was ordered to condone crimes of violence against defenceless and loyal women. He charges the British Government of "disloyalty to ideals". He pointedly asks, Why is this meek unassuming little Hindu lied about in the English Press and called a half-naked Fakir who desires to turn the Christian missionaries out of India? For the same reason that the same Press lied about the Irish in 1920-21 and accused them of murdering each other for their good! What humbug "Press" loyalty . . . . press patriotism! "Loyalty" to what? The Press? Patriotic to what God knows: Does Lord Rothermere know? . . . . India can be free, France can be free, Germany can be free,—all can be free to do as they *should*, not as they *would*, provided this world religion called "patriotism" is destroyed and in its place is set up, loyalty to the religion of "humanity." One of the most unanswerable indictments that have ever been written.

The approach

IT IS TO DRAW up a similar indictment that Gandhiji has come to England and he has been already at work; perhaps his manner would make his indictment the most irresistible. For every word that he utters comes deliberately out of the mint of his heart bearing the ring of truth and non-violence. That is the reason why the preliminary statement made by him in the Round Table Conference, though it was a claim for complete independence did not offend. That is why when he talked of a rebellious India and of Lancashire which should expiate its sins against India in the House of Commons not one of the M. P.s took it amiss, and

that is why when he entered a firm protest against the dilatoriness of the proceedings of the Federal Structure Committee and against the packed nature of British India delegation, no one took the slightest exception. "England and India bound by the silken cord of love," "A willing partnership which could be ended at will and not one super-imposed by one nation on another," "India cannot and will not remain a subject nation any longer," are phrases that will be long current here before we have left the shores of England.

The dilarory tactics of Government have certainly exasperated him, and he is leaving no stône unturned to force the pace. With an unprecedentedly unequal trade balance, with the number of unemployed threatening to mount up to 30,00,000, with heaps of gold being carried away through the air by France, with the Chancellor trying desperate measures to balance the budget and with men in the services threatening to mutiny, they may not be in a position to find time to think of India. They may be in no mood to consider the suggestion made by Gandhiji that India, made an equal partner, may be of valuable assistance to England in balancing the budget not for once but for all time. Perhaps they may profitably remind themselves of the great words of Chamberlain at Liverpool uttered in a tone of genuine penitence: "Now and then there comes a moment when courage is safer than prudence, when some great act of faith touching the hearts and stirring the emotions of men, achieves the miracle that no arts of statesmanship can compass."

II, III & IV

Snail Slow

IT WILL BE remembered that Gandhiji lodged, at the Federal Structure Committee on the 17th September a "gentle, humble complaint against His Majesty's advisers." He had appealed to them, through Lord Sankey, to let the Indian delegates know their mind, and rather than carry on interminable discussions on details which certainly could be settled later on, by Indians themselves, to place all their cards on the table and to put forward concrete proposals. But the same tedious process continues. They have been going round and round without ever making an attempt to get near the centre. As for Gandhiji, he has already placed the Congress position before the Committee, and explained the implications of the Congress mandate.

But the British nation is absorbed in her own problem, devising and adopting palliatives one after another, whilst in India the representative of His Majesty's Government reveal what Gandhiji characterised as "the unbending and unbendable attitude of the Government." The Secretary of State calls attention to the efforts of the National Government towards re-establishing confidence in British Finance and British Currency while no effort is being made here or in India to restore Indian confidence in the British Government.

Lord Irwin has deliberately kept himself aloof, lest he should seem unnecessarily to interfere in Indian affairs.

GANDHIJI IS availing himself of every minute at his disposal to place before the the British public the Case for Ind˙ ː In an article in the *Daily Mail* he in ›duced to the readers what he described as his "principal," *viz.*, The Indian National Congress and explained succinctly the Indian demand at a special meeting of the Labour M. P. in the House of Commons. He combated the preconceived notions and the hardened prejudices of even educated Britishers who were systematically being taught false history. He described them as the "salt of the earth as you represent the poorest common labourer," but he said he could not discriminate between them and the other parties, so far as the Indian question was concerned. "I have got to woo them all equally." But before the representatives of the working men he placed the poverty aspect of the question at great length. "I want to disabuse your minds of the notion that the masses of India are enamoured of Pax Britannica. The truth is that they are anxious to throw off the British yoke simply because they do not want to starve. And what else can happen when in a much more prosperous country like yours, your Prime Minister does not draw more than 50 times the average per capita income, whereas in India the Viceroy gets something like 5,000 times the average income of an Indian. And if the average income is so low you can understand that the actual income in a vast number of cases must be nil." The Army question was also discussed, but it attracted nothing like the attention that the poverty question did. The Labour M. P.s were all the while thinking of their own unemployed, and their questions centred round the problem of Lancashire cloth. "Tell me," said Gandhiji in a tone full of pathos, "is India morally bound to purchase

Presenting India's Case

Lancashire cloth whilst she can produce her own? Does not Lancashire owe any amends to India having prospered on the ruin of India?" They had no reply. "But if you don't buy our cloth we won't buy your tea or jute either," said one of the M. P.s in the plain blunt Britisher's manner. "No, certainly not," said Gandhiji. "It is entirely a matter of choice. We don't want to force our tea or jute on you."

The meeting with the members of the three parties was livelier still. For there instead of making an appeal, he made out a strong case for the independence of India dealing at length with the "safeguards" and the "reservations." "Without a control over defence and external affairs it is no independence that we would get, it would not be even a mild form of self-government. It will be a mere husk not worth touching." He exposed the frontier bogey and asserted that having survived numerous attacks and invasions in the past we were capable of doing so in the future, Pax Britannica was more or less imaginary, and the Indians had lived in greater peace in the Princes' India than in British India. "Don't think, therefore, that without you we shall have to commit suicide or that we shall destroy one another. And yet it does not mean that we shall do away with every British soldier or British officer. We will keep those whom we need if they will live there on our terms. But I am told that no British soldier or even civilian will ever serve under us. Frankly, I cannot understand this pride of race. We—not only the Congress, but all parties—have come to the conclusion that the British administration is top heavy, and the military expenditure is crushing the nation to death. One of the acid tests of our getting even the mildest form of independence is this control over the army. Under

the question of safeguards comes the maintenance of the Civil Service on its present basis. Well, the fact of the matter is that however able, however industrious, however efficient these civilians may be they are of no use to us if they are too expensive. We shall do without your expert assistance, as the millions in India go all their lives without any expert medical assistance. Their heavy salaries are said to be sufficient insurance against bribery and corruption. Well, it is too high a premium to pay and as for the Indian servants the bribes they may take would be more than covered by the high salaries and expenses of a few Civilians.

Financial Safeguards

"UNDER THE present safeguards, 80 per cent. of the revenue is to be farmed out to the foreigner and only 20% to be left to us from which we are to run the departments of education, sanitation etc. I would not touch that independence. I would far rather remain in compulsory subjection and declare myself a rebel than that I should take charge of a Government that I know is bound to declare itself bankrupt in say five or ten years. No self-respecting Indian, I venture to submit to you, can possibly accept that state of things. I would fight with my blood as a civil resister, I would rather that you took me to your jails and gave me *lathi* blows than pretend to 'co-operate' with you as a slave — which in my humble opinion is what is meant by these two safeguards."

The Europeans

UNDER THE head, the safeguards for minorities he discussed the economic safeguards as they were being asked for for the Europeans who were one of the minority communities in India. The demand was preposterous in the extreme. It was no compliment to the

Englishman, neither was it a compliment to the Indians. A handful of Europeans asking for protection from 300 million "slaves" is an idea that he could not stomach. One may ask for guarantees from enemies but never from friends. Let them be satisfied with what protection that service accepted by the Indians could afford. "British trade," said he categorically, "needs no protection if it is in the interests of India. No amount of protection will help it if it is inimical to the interest of India. Rest assured that the three hundred million partners, when the weight is lifted off their shoulders will be prosperous partners, ready to help England, not to exploit a single individual or a nation but ready to help in a partnership for the good of all nations. That will be a partnership which gods will descend on the earth to witness. That will be a partnership worth having and which will endure and will render some service to humanity."

The Mills

THE "DEAL" with the mill-owners of Bombay seemed to them to be Gandhiji's veritable Achilles' heel. Gandhiji went one better than they and said that the "deal" was not only with the Bombay mill-owners, but with the Ahmedabad mill-owners too, but that the terms of the "deal" secured the Khadi producer from the competition of the mills, and that though the workers in some of these mills were living under conditions which may be described as "sweating," the mill-owners were yielding to gentle pressure and persuasion, and the Labour Union in Ahmedabad was, according to Mr. Tom Shaw's testimony, the most ideal in the world.

GANDHIJI'S SECOND speech in the Federal Structure Committee seems to ave alarmed some friends in India and surprised some friends here. Gandhiji has made no secret of the irreducible minimum that he expects from every prince joining the Federation, and has given his word to the friends from the native States that he will have nothing less. The speech was an appeal to the princes to play up and to submit proposals to the Committee. Wherein lies the surrender? The question of surrender can come only when the proposals are submitted to the Committee.

A Misapprehension Cleared

The part of the speech that has surprised friends here is Gandhiji's acceptance of the principle of indirect election. They forget that part and parcel of his scheme are a single chamber and adult suffrage (with only a 'character limit'), which enables us "to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Musalmans, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes."

BUT I MUST leave these talks with the big people and come back to our homely surroundings of the Kingsley Hall. Friends have been remonstrating with him against staying at this place so distant from the palaces and hotels. English friends have been forthcoming ready to offer their houses in the neighbourhood of St. James' Palace, but Gandhiji is clear that he must not leave the home of the humble folk which has become his real home. He may have an office where he can receive and meet friends — and some Indian friends have placed their houses at his disposal for the purpose — but he cannot afford to

His abode

miss the friends in the East End who meet him and bid him good morning when he is out for a walk nor can he miss the little ones who surround him and have an occasional chat. In fact, a special meeting with these people was a thing he most enjoyed. He felt as though he was in the midst of the children of the Ashram, answering their simple but penetrating and puzzling inquiries and spreading through them his message of truth and love. "What is your language, Mr. Gandhi?' They ask, and Gandhiji takes them through the etymology of common words in English and Indian vernaculars and shows them that we are after all children of the same Father. He tells them stories of his childhood and explains how it is better by far not to hit back than to return a blow for a blow. He tells them why he wears the sort of clothes he wears and he also tells them why he lives amongst them. "This, to me, is the real Round Table Conference work," he said one day. "I know there are friends who can give me their houses; I know there are friends who can generously spend money for me. But I feel happy in Miss Lester's abode because I get here a taste of the life I am pledged to live. She has incurred no extra expense for me—a thing any one can do—but she has put herself and her co-workers to considerable inconvenience and imposed more work on them for my sake. They have vacated the rooms I am occupying and they sleep on the verandah. They work for themselves. I and my co-workers have added to their work which they have taken upon themselves cheerfully. How dare I tear myself from these surroundings? An irresistible plea, which Charlie Andrews can certainly not strive against." Just on the day the question of shifting to another house was being discussed, came in an old, thin, short woman,

with eyes full of fire just to shake hands with Gandhiji. As she was returning she turned to me and said, "Don't think of leaving this place. It is not Muriel's place. Neither is it built for her inmates nor for us. It is in memory of her brother who lived for an idea of which Mr. Gandhi is an embodiment. It is just the place for him. This lady, close on 80, is Miss Hughes, the daughter of the author of *Tom Browne's School Days.*

His Friends

THE IMPORTANCE of this place can best be gauged by the number of common people who get an opportunity of knowing him and meeting him here. It is these contacts that enrich life and make it worth living, not those with men and women with whom life is a chess-board and the highest skill consists in checkmating one's partner. I propose to record here just one or two such contacts. The day seemed to be an autograph day and every one of those who succeeded in getting an autograph had his own story to tell.

A Good Investment

BEN PLATTEN, who works with Miss Lester and slaves for us from morning until night, never obstruding himself on Gandhiji, came one day with a book in which he wanted Gandhiji's autograph: "I purchased that book for a shilling, Mr. Gandhi. I was on the staff of the *Daily Herald* then, the book was received for review, but it was regarded as too insignificant to be reviewed and thrown among books to be disposed of, with the result that I got it for a shilling. I took it home, read in from cover to cover and immediately made use of it. I introduced you to the

people who gather together in Kingsley Hall and gave a course of lectures on you. With that dates our first acquaintance with you."

Gandhiji was agreeably surprised. "Then it is you who introduced me to Muriel?"

"I shall not presume to say so. Perhaps she knew you before. But the other friends came to know fully about you from what I told them from the book. It contained so much that I had thought myself but never expressed." "Then I borrowed all the thoughts from you or you borrowed them from me," said Gandhiji laughing. "Anyway it was a good investment, wasn't it?"

"None could have been better, and you will agree that what I have done with it entitles me to the autograph."

Will the reader guess the name of the shilling's worth?

A Father of Eight

THE MAN HAD been in the navy and knew Miraben's father and since she was the daughter of his former Admiral he had a claim upon her. As she was returning from her walk one morning he followed her and thus described his credentials for having an autograph from Gandhiji: "I have been in the Navy for 21 years. I have served under your father, and my son-in-law supplies the goat's milk for Mr. Gandhi. Would he not kindly give me an autograph?" He had not appealed to her in vain. Gandhiji asked him to be ushered in. He came and narrated his autobiography, this time with the following additional remarks:

"I wish you and your mission real good luck, sir. I have had enough of this world. I served during the war; was thrown about from place to place—we

were ordered to march to Salonica from Gallipoli with frozen feet and have passed through unspeakable horrors. I would sooner be in prison than serve during the next war. It is a dreadful business, sir. I should prefer to fight for your cause. I wish you success in your mission." He had photographs of his daughter and son-in-law who supplied the milk.

"How many children have you?" Gandhiji asked him as he was preparing to go.

"Eight, sir, four sons and four daughters."

"I have four sons," said Gandhiji, "so I can race with you half way." And the whole house roared with laughter.

Charlie Chaplin

PERHAPS FEW would believe that when Gandhiji was told that Mr. Charlie Chaplin would like to see him, he innocently asked who that distinguished person was. For several years Gandhiji's life has been such as to allow him no time to see or hear or read anything that does not come to him in the ordinary course of work that he has cut out for himself. But as soon as he was told that Mr. Chaplin, came from the people and lived for the people, and that he had made millions laugh, he agreed to meet him at the house of Dr. Katial, who has placed himself and his car at our disposal during Gandhiji's stay in London. Mr. Chaplin struck me to be a genial, unassuming gentleman and nothing like we find him on the film. But perhaps in concealing himself lies his skill. Gandhiji had not heard of him, but he had evidently heard of Gandhiji's spinning wheel and the very first question he asked was why Gandhiji was against machinery. The question delighted Gandhiji who explained to him in detail why the six months'

unemployment of the whole peasant population of India made it important for him to restore them to their former subsidiary industry. "Is it then only as regards cloth?" "Precisely," said Gandhiji. "In cloth and food every nation should be self-contained. We were self-contained and want to be that again. England with her large-scale production has to look for a market elsewhere. We call it exploitation. And an exploiting England is a danger to the world, but if that is so, how much more so would be an exploiting India, if she took to machinery and produced cloth many times in excess of her requirements."

"So the question is confined only to India?" said Mr. Chaplin grasping the point quickly. "But supposing you had in India the independence of Russia, and you could find other work for your unemployed and ensure equable distribution of wealth, you would not then despise machinery? You would subscribe to shorter hours of work and more leisure for the worker?"

"Certainly," said Gandhiji. The question has now been discussed with Gandhiji for the hundreth time, but I have not come across a lay foreigner who grasped the situation so quickly. The reason was perhaps his freedom from prejudice or prepossession and his sympathy.

This symapathy came vividly out when Sarojinidevi reminded him of his visit to an English prison. "I can face a crowd of rich people," he said, "but I cannot face these prisoners. But for the Grace of God, say I to myself, you would have been with them. One feels quite inferior to the occasion as one cannot do anything. What difference is there between us and them excepting that of the bars around them? I am for a radical prison reform. Crime is a disease like

any other and it should be treated not in prison but in houses of correction."

"THE LAHORE Resolution and the Karachi Resolution are identical," said Gandhiji in answer to a question asked by a student. "The Karachi Resolution mentions and reaffirms the Lahore Resolution, but makes it clear that complete independence cannot possibly exclude an honourable partnership with Great Britain. Just as there can be a partnership between America and England, in the same way we can have a partnership between England and India. The Karachi Resolution does contemplate severance, inasmuch as we do not want to belong to the Empire. But it is easy to conceive India as a partner of Great Britain.

No Empire but only a Partnership

"There was a time when I was enamoured of dominion status, but I found that dominion status is a status common to members of the same family—Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand etc. These are daughter states in a sense that India is not. The bulk of the population of these countries is English speaking and their status implies some kind of relationship with Britain. The Lahore Congress erased the idea of the Empire from the minds of Indians and placed independence in front of them. Karachi provided the interpretation which is this, that even as an independent people we could have partnership with Great Britain, if, of course she wants it. So long as the Empire idea persists, the centre will be Downing Street, but with India as an independent partner with Britain the centre of policies would change from Downing Street to Delhi. India

as an independent partner would have a special contribution to make in a world which is getting weary of war and bloodshed. In case of an outbreak of war it would be the common effort of India and Great Britain to prevent war, not indeed by force of arms, but by the irresistible force of example. This may appear to you to be an extravagant claim and make you laugh at it. But here is the representative of the nation come to put forward that claim and he is not prepared to subscribe to anything less and you will find that if that is not gained I shall go away, defeated, but not humiliated. But I shall have nothing less, and if the demand is not granted I shall invite the country to go through a long fiery ordeal and write you too to give your hearty co-operation."

"The object of our non-violent movement," he said at another meeting, "is complete independenee for India—not in any mystic sense but in the English sense of the term—without any mental reservation. I feel that every country is entitled to it without any question of its fitness or otherwise. As every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly. Just as a man with bad lungs will breathe with difficulty, even so India, because of her ailments may make a thousand mistakes. The doctrine of fitness to govern is a mere eyewash. Independence means nothing more or less than getting out of alien control."

What "getting out of alien control" means he made abundantly clear in his speech before the Indian merchants. "The Congress came to the deliberate conclusion that we should have absolute control of our own finances. Without that absolute control on

finance. no constitution of self-government so called, would meet the demands of the nation. As you know, it is part of the mandate given to me by the Congress that complete independence would be meaningless unless it was accompanied by complete control over finance, defence and external affairs. I, for one, cannot conceive any form of Government to be either responsible Government or self-Government, let alone complete independence, if we have not complete control over defence and our finance."

Snail slow

BUT THE VERY fact that he wants complete independence and will have nothing less, makes him keenly sensible of the difficulties of the task. As the Conference proceeds at a snail's pace everyday, he sees it more clearly than ever before that the task is herculean. The Conference is not composed of representatives of the nation, but of "representatives of the Prime Minister's choice" as Sir Ali Imam so graphically put it. "I am not going to make a scapegoat of myself," said the Prime Minister, "but I want you all to be your own scapegoats" words which contained an unconscious joke characteristic of the Prime Minister, whom the humourist papers here have immortalised in a cartoon as a Sphinx. To the Musalman friends here, the very mention of "nationalist Musalmans" is anathema, and the man who ten years ago was introduced by themselves to Gandhiji as a man of honour and sterling worth, and who has stood by the nation through all our trying times, is not necessary to voice the feeling of an important section of the Muslims. The Hindu friends are alarmed at Gandhiji's talk of complete surrender and the so called representatives of the small minorities are afraid of

their interests being swept away with the surrender. No wonder Gandhiji's statment that he who will serve the National Cause should demand no rights and make room for those who demand rights should be a cry in the wilderness. "Do you think," he exclaimed, "that if I could solve it, I should allow the miserable question to hang on and make us an object of shame before the whole world?"

On the other hand, there is no decisive move on the part of Government. They would perhaps prefer to watch the game. Gandhiji has made it clear to them, as he did at last night's reception given by the London Indians: "The Government have not laid their cards on the table, but the time is fast coming when they will have to declare their policy, one way or the other. For, the members, who have come six thousands miles away from their homes cannot afford to idle away their time here. The moment I find that I can no longer carry conviction with the British ministers and the British public, whose opinion I am sedulously trying to cultivate, you will find my back turned upon the shores of England."

In this connection I would refer to the full-throated utterance of Gandhiji before the four or five hundred friends who had gathered together to honour him on his birthday and on whose behalf Mr. Fenner Brockway assured Gandhiji of their hearty support in any campaign that India may have to undertake in the near future. Perhaps, Mr. Brockway knew how the wind was blowing, but it was the transparent and touching sincerity of his utterance that prompted Gandhiji to give expression to the feelings that were not uppermost in his mind, but lay deep down in his heart.

BUT, IF Mr. Fenner Brockway and his party had proved themselves to be "friends indeed," Gandhiji is fast making fresh friends who will also be the friends in need and strengthen Mr. Brockway's gallant band. Though there is much ignorance, due to the teaching of false history and pernicious newspaper propaganda, there is a widespread desire expressed everywhere for the right information about India, and many groups of young men have approached Gandhiji for a conference and talk. Note-worthy among them were the members of the Oxford House, a group of Oxford men who have settled in, or who are giving the best part of their time to the people living in the East End. Numerous questions were asked in a sincere spirit of inquiry after Gandhiji had in brief put the case for India. Here are some of them with their answers:

Future Friends

Do you want British control to be withdrawn at once?

CERTAINLY. I have never contemplated a gradual process. But that does not mean complete isolation from Great Britain. If Great Britain will have complete partnership I would treasure it, but it must be a real partnership, no cloak for rulership or guardianship. I know that some of you honestly entertain the fear that there would be anarchy and bloodshed no sooner than the British withdrew from India. Well, if the British so choose, it is up to them to help us out of the mess that they have helped to create. They are responsible for much of the dissensions between different communities and they are responsible for having emasculated a whole people. And, I may confess, that we may experience temporary difficulty if you went away at once. But it

Period of Transition

is open to you to render some assistance, provided that you would consent to remain under our control. But what can conquer your unpardonable pride of race? I would willingly have British soldiers and British officers under our national Government, we would be guided by their advice too, but the final direction of policy must be ours. But, even if you withdrew and we were without any disciplined assistance, we have enough faith in our non-violence. I do not think that we will not survive the withdrawal of British power and British assistance both of which are today superimposed on us. With these superimposed I should not feel the glow of freedom. And I wish that we may have an opportunity to fight unto death for freedom, if only to open your eyes. Why is it that you do not ask questions of fitness in respect of the Afghans? We have a culture not inferior to theirs. Or do you think it is difficult to win freedom and to enjoy it without an element of savagery in one's nature? Well, if we are a nation of cowards the sooner you leave us to our fate the better that the burden of cowards was removed from this earth. But cowards cannot for ever remain cowards. You do not know what a coward I was when young and you will agree that I am not quite a coward today. Multiply my example and you will have one whole nation shaking of its cowardioe.

Has India benefited by Christianity?

Christian influence

INDIRECTLY. I have spoken about this more than once. The contacts of some of the noblest Christians could not but benefit us. We studied their lives, we came in contact with them, and they naturally ennobled us. But as regards missionary

activities as such, I cannot but use the language of caution. The very least I would say is that I doubt if they have benefited India. The most I could say is that they have repelled India from Christianity and placed a barrier between Christian life and Hindu or Musalman life. When I go to your scriptures I do not see the barrier raised, but when I see a Missionary I find that barrier rising up before my eyes. I want you to accept this testimony from one who was for a time susceptible to those influences. The missionaries working in Colleges and Hospitals too have served us with the mental reservation that through the Hospital and College they want people to come to Christ. I have a definite feeling that if you want us to feel the aroma of Christianity, you must copy the rose. The rose irresistibly draws people to itself, and the scent remains with them. Even so, the aroma of Christianity is subtler even than the rose and should, therefore, be imparted in an even quieter, and more imperceptible manner, if possible.

* *

Uncle Gandhi

MR. CARTER, member of an important Royal Commission on Breweries and a great temperance reformer, was with Gandhiji this morning during the walk. He came to understand the question of the drink traffic in India and to fix up details of a meeting for a conference on the question. The moment he saw the common people rushing out to greet Gandhiji he said: "You are their true representative and they would like you to settle here" "They are your Constituency" said Miss Lester. Numerous birthday greetings received by Gandhiji are from these new friends—many among them children who have sent to him flowers—"their pals"

and wished many a happy return of the day to "Uncle Gandhi."

Some of the most interesting questions were asked by Indian students at the meeting where until late in the night Gandhiji regaled them with banter and urbane sarcasm.

Is not your demand of unity from the Musalmans as absurd as the demand of unity that our Government makes of us? Why not give up everything rather than prevent the solution of such a big question?

Love *vs.* Bayonet

YOU HAVE MADE a double mistake. First, in comparing what I have said to the Musalmans with what Government are saying to us. Seemingly, one would think, it was a substantial analogy, but if you look deeper you will find that there is no point of comparision. The British attitude is backed by the bayonet, whereas, what I say proceeds from the heart and has nothing but affection to back it. The surgeon and the tyrant assassin use the same instruments with contrary results. What I have said is that I could not possibly carry any demand which has not the backing of all Musalman parties. How can I be guided by a mere majority? The deeper question is that whilst there are one set of friends asking for one thing I have got another set of comrades with whom I have worked at this very thing and who some time ago were introduced by the other set of friends as the most estimable co-workers. Am I to be guilty of disloyalty to them?

And you must understand that there is nothing in my power to grant. I only told them that I would

champion their demand if it had a unanimous backing. As for my position of surrender to those who ask for rights, it has been a conviction of a lifetime. If I could persuade the Hindus to adopt my attitude there would be an immediate solution of the question, but there I have a Mt. Everest to climb, so what I have said is not so foolish as you may imagine. If I alone had anything in my power, I should not have allowed the miserable question to hang on and make us an object of humiliation before the whole world.

Lastly, I have no religion so far as this question is concerned. That does not mean that I am not a Hindu. But my Hinduism is not tarnished or harmed by the surrender I propose. When I took upon myself alone to represent the Congress I said to myself that I could not consider the question in terms of Hinduism but in terms of nationalism, in the terms of the rights and interests of all Indians. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the Congress claims to be the custodian of all interests—even of English interests, in so far as they would regard India as their home and not claim any interests in conflict with those of the dumb millions.

Why did you say nothing about the subjects of the Native States at the Conference? I am afraid, you have sacrificed their interests.

Well, those people did not expect me to make wordy declarations before the R. T. C., but they certainly expect me to place certain things before the Princes, which I have done. There would be time to criticise my action when it fails. I must be permitted to handle things after my own fashion. And it is not the R. T. C. that is going to give me what I want for the subjects of the States. I have to take it from the

Princes. Similar is the questions of the Hindu Muslim unity. I would bend my knee before Musalmans and ask from them what I want, but I could not do it across the round table. You must know that I am a skilled advocate and after all, if I fail, you can take away the brief from me.

Why did you commit yourself to the indirect method of election? Don't you know that the Nehru Report disapproves of it?

Your question is good, but it betrays what we call in logic an ambiguous middle. Leave alone the indirect method of election in the Nehru report. It is a different thing altogether. As for the method I propounded, I may tell you that it is daily growing upon me. All that you need to understand is that it is intimately connected with adult suffrage which cannot be effectively worked except by it. After all you will have seven hundred thousand electors, themselves elected by the whole adult population of India. Without my method it will be an unwieldy and expensive electorate. Every village republic, to use the words of Maine, would choose an attorney and instruct him to elect a representative for the highest legislature in the land.

After all, what may suit England and the Western world need not necessarilly suit us. Why should we be blotting sheets of Western civilisation. Ours is a country governed by entirely different conditions. Why should we not have our own special method of election?

V

The Clouds

SPEAKING AT THE special meeting of the Friends of India—where for the first time practically all the audience was squatting and we had prayers as we have in India—Gandhiji asked them to pray for India and her cause. "So far as human effort is concerned I seem to be failing. Burdens are being thrown upon me which I am ill able to bear. It is a herculean task, at the end of which there may be nothing more to be done and there may be no result. But it does not matter. No honest genuine effort has ever failed." The statement at the Minorities' Committee amounted to the same thing expressed in the language of politics. The cup of bitterness was fairly full. To make it complete came the speeches of some of the members of the delegation, fully backed by the speech of the Prime Minister. However much the nominees may protest, the truth of Gandhiji's analysis will not be challenged seriously even by the people whom some of the delegates claim to represent: "Causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent. We are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here. Further, you will allow me to say that this was hardly the time to summon the Minorities' Committee. It lacks the sense of reality inasmuch we do not know what it is that we are going to get. If we knew in a definite manner that

we are going to get the thing we want we should hesitate fifty times before we threw it away in a sinful wrangle."

With soul so dead

AND IN ENTERING their protest against these remarks the delegates proved the truth of them. Who but the nominees of the Government would make statements like those made by Sir Mahomed Shafi or Dr. Ambedkar? "We who are convinced" said Sir Mahomed, "that the future of India lies within the British Commonwealth of nations are not willing to accept the arbitration of any outsider. His Majesty's Government, as the head of that Commonwealth, are the judges who are in the best position to decide the question and we are perfectly willing that they should be judges of the question." "The depressed classes," said Dr. Ambedkar, "are not anxious, they are not clamourous, they have not started any movement for claiming that there shall be an immediate transfer of power from the British to the Indian people." He evidently thinks that the interests of his community would be safer in the hands of the British Government than in the hands of the self-governing or independent India.

The Monkey and the Cats

WITH THESE statements of these friends before him, the task of the Prime Minister was easy. Never was one so forcibly reminded of the proverbial monkey and the cats than by the very plausible speech of the Prime Minister. The very accent and intonation, the repeated use of the words "honestly" and "believe me," gave him away. "But supposing I said to you on behalf of the Government and supposing

the Parliament agreed, 'Take the business over to yourselves, why you know perfectly well that you could not go six inches without coming to a deadlock.' Has this ever been seriously proposed? Instead, in this very speech the Prime Minister proudly said: "If a Government produces its proposals, well, that is as near a last word as the circumstances of creation will allow anybody to say a last word on anything." !!!

When one is prepared for the worst nothing can possibly matter. It was, therefore, that when friends came to him, some indignant and some deeply hurt, he said: "This is all to the good. We are nearing the parting of the ways and our issue is getting clearer at every step. As for Dr. Ambedkar it is impossible to get angry with him or to be hurt by what he says. Don't you see our own sins (*i. e.* the sins of Hindu Community) are incarnated in what he said this morning?" Perhaps when all these controversies have ended, and men are composed enough to review the past dispassionately, the verdict will be clear that no one could represent the untouchables more than he who concluded his speech with this ringing declaration: "What these people need more than election to the legislatures is protection from social and religious persecution. Custom, which is often more powerful than law, has brought them to a degradation of which every thinking Hindu has need to feel ashamed and to do penance. I should, therefore, have the most drastic legislation rendering criminal all the social persecution to which these fellow countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God the conscience of Hindus has been stirred and untouchability will soon be a relic of our sinful past."

"But," said Gandhiji, at the Friends of India meeting, "if I am experiencing these chilly and chilling difficulties so far as my work is concerned I am having nothing but perennial joy outside the Conference and the committees. People seem instinctively to understand the thing. Although I am an utter stranger, they wish me well and wish well to the cause. The cause and I are one, they know, and so they greet me with smiles and blessings and this applies to people high and low. And so I comfort myself that so long as my cause is truthful and the means clean and non-violent all is well."

The Silver Lining

Among the intellectuals the best of them are already seeking to establish contact with Gandhiji. Mr. Brailsford and Mr. Laski have already had long talks with him. Mr. Shaw Desmond had a long interview wherein he steered clear of politics which he said he detested, and talked of the means of getting out of the deep slough into which the Western world is sinking deeper and deeper. He discussed the question of the education of the child, listened with rapt attention as Gandhiji gave him the rich experience of a lifetime of the value of selfrestraint and the great part it plays as much in the life of the child as of the adult. "What is the cause of the present chaos?" he asked. "It is exploitation" said Gandhiji "I will not say of the weaker nations by the stronger, but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others. In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpese or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know." "Dont you think", said Mr. Desmond, "all these people here

are overfed? How can we teach them to feed less?" "The force of circumstances," said Gandhiji, laughing. "They are bound to realise one of these days that England is not going to return to her old prosperity. They must realise that many nations bid fare to divide the spoils with them and as soon as they do so they will cut the coat according to their cloth." "This crisis therefore," said Mr. Desmond, with great emphasis, "is a great thing, I have no doubt."

The Sanskrit professor of the London University came quietly in the other day, anxious to pay his respects to Gandhiji. "I am a lover of India and a great admirer of you, and all my good wishes are with you" said he. "Are you a great scholar?" Gandhiji asked him. He smiled. "Tell me without any false modesty", said Gandhiji disarming all his modesty. "Are you as great a scholar as Max Muller"? "Well, yes," said he, "I have faith in my capacity and if I had not it, I would not dare to occupy the Chair of Sanskrit. I know practically the whole of the Gita by heart, and have made a fairly deep study of the Upanishads.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूँ स्वाम् ॥
नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिंगात्
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वांस्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥

is my motto." "Well, we have much to teach you in pronounciation," said Gandhiji laughing.

But there it is. The visit is leading on to numerous such contacts and a friend was telling me yesterday that though he had read Gandhiji's writings he had not the slightest idea of the kind of man Gandhiji would really be. "The result of the English visit,

apart from the Round Table Conference, is going to be incalculable," said he.

From America

THE MOST numerous among the foreign visitors have been Americans of course, and ever since Gandhiji gave that broadcast message to America, we have been having hundreds of letters from America each week. The message of non-violence, heard from his own lips, has thrilled them through and through, and there is not a letter but has a reference to it. "Your radio message came clear as a bell over the ocean," says a correspondent, "I heard it easily. I congratulate you on the excellency and spiritual quality of your talk. We need it desperately for we sing songs of peace and prepare for war. I would ask one favour of you. Would you be so good as to write out for me the smashing sentence: 'The world is sick unto death of blood spilling'—and sign it with your name. I would like to reproduce that sentence in your own handwriting on my November the 8th Calendar—that being the Sunday preceding Armistice Day observance.

From the Emerald Isle

"WE ARE IN the same category as you," said an Irish friend. "We are afraid, you are still on the threshold and may have to go through much suffering. So please do come and visit a sister nation in the same plight, equally badly exploited and ravaged as India. I would give an idea of the poverty of Ireland from the poverty of Dublin. In that little city itself there are no less than 28,000 houses which can be described as no better than slums. The agriculturist

is very poor indeed, and all that in spite of our great productivity. Do please come and study our problem."

From Germany

WERNER ZIMMERMAN, though a Swiss, is editing a German monthly called *Tau*, wherein he expounds the philosophy and politics of non-violence. Paul and Edith Geheeb have a community of two hundred children of different lands and races in a village near Frankfurt. They "read *Young India* every week and are one with you in all your life's activities. We try to educate our children by our own life in the spirit of non-violence. You will find here many workers devoted to the cause for which you are the greatest instrument of God. We place our school at your disposal during your stay here and we shall be happy if you can bring with you your Indian fellow workers as well. We shall ask R. Rolland and other friends who are working for your ideals in many parts of Europe, and Germany in particular, to come and meet you."

Several friends from Hamburg wired warmly: "As a missionary circle we tried to understand the Indian soul. After having read all we could about Gandhi we, as decided Christians, want to get into contact with the man, who not being a Christian, lives Christianity. We do want to see you. It would mean so much for all our life. Would it be possible to get into nearer contact with you than by reading your books? Can we meet you sometime, somewhere, personally?"

Madame Montessori paid a memorable visit. "We are members of the same family," said Gandhiji greeting her.

"I bring you the greetings of children." said Madame Montessori. "If you have children," said Gandhiji, "I have children too. Friends in India ask me to imitate you. I say to them, no; I should not imitate you but should assimilate you and the fundamental truth underlying your method." "As I am asking my own children to assimilate the heart of Gandhi," said Madame Montessori in sweet Italian which her interpreter translated for Gandhiji. "I know," she added gratefully, "that feeling for me over there in your part of the world is deeper than here." "Yes," said Gandhiji, "you have the largest number of adherents in India, outside Europe" and she remembered Jamu Dani and said she loved to call him her Indian son. She has promised to come again with her English children one day.

VI

The Communal Question

IT WILL BE remembered that Gandhiji's speech announcing the failure of the negotiations on the Communal question marked the second important point in the discussions—the first being the first speech in the Federal Structure Committee. This speech did indeed put the backs up of several high dignitaries, but convinced them that Gandhiji was on no account going to mince matters. Even papers like the *Manchester Guardian* were not prepared to believe that the Minorities' Committee was unnecessarily sandwiched into the deliberations of the Federal Committee and that the Communal question had been given an undue prominence. Practically the whole week has been taken up in trying to convince

those concerned that he was in dead earnest when he said it and that it was the duty of Government to place all the cards on the table.

Here is a series of questions and answers:

If the Communal problem should not predominate over all the rest, why should you yourself have said, at one stage, that you would not think of going to the Round Table Conference, unless the Communal question was settled?

You are right. But you forget that I was borne down by the extreme pressure of English and other friends in India who said that it was imperative that I should go. I was also persuaded that, if only to keep my word of honour with Lord Irwin, I should go. Now, here I find myself face to face with men who are not nationalists, and who were selected only because they were Communalists. Therefore, though I said that it was a matter of humiliation for us all not to have been able to come to a decision, the principal cause was the very composition of the Committee itself. It is too unreal for words. There are men who claim to represent Communities which, if they were in India, and if a referendum were to be taken, would disown them.

What about the untouchables? Dr. Ambedkar was very severe on you and said that the Congress had no right to claim to represent the untouchables?

I am glad you have asked the question. I do not mind Dr. Ambedkar. He has a right even to spit upon me, as every untouchable has, and I would keep on smiling if they did so. But I may inform you that Dr. Ambedkar speaks for that particular part of the country where he comes from. He cannot speak for the rest of India and I have numerous telegrams from the so-called 'untouchables' in various parts of India

assuring me that they have the fullest faith in the Congress and disowning Dr. Ambedkar. And this confidence has a reason. They know the work that the Congress is doing for them and they know that if they cannot succeed in making their voice felt I would be prepared to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf and paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition, if there were such an opposition against them. On the other hand, if they were to be given special electorates, as Dr. Ambedkar persists in demanding, it would do that very community immense harm. It would divide the Hindu community into armed camps and provoke needless opposition.

I see your point, and I have no doubt that you can legitimately speak for the untouchables. But you seem to ignore the fact that communities all the world over insist on being represented by their own people. The devoted Liberals of the north would truly represent the working men, but they would have their representatives from amongst themselves, and the great stubborn fact against you is that you are not an untouchable!

I know it very well. But the fact that I claim to represent them does not mean that I should think of representing them on the legislatures. By no means. I should have their own representatives drawn from their own class on the legislatures, and if they are left out I should provide for their statutory co-option by the elected members. But when I am talking of representing them, I am talking of the representation on the Round Table Conference and I can assure you that if any one in India challenged our claim I should gladly face a referendum and successfully.

From this point of view it would be interesting to hear you about the Musalmans too. You do not say that the Musalmans here do not represent their community?

Well, they are not duly elected, and I may tell you that I asked so many of the real nationalist Musalmans to stay away. There is a vast majority of the younger leaders—Mr. Khawaja, Mr. Sherwani, to name only two—whom I came to know only through the friends who are today ranged against the Congress, and who are opposed to any Communal solution of the problem. Personally, I would give the Musalmans all that they want and I have been waking up late after midnight in persuading the Hindus and the Sikhs to go with me, but I have failed. Do you think I would have failed if the Sikhs were elected by the Sikhs and not nominated by Government? Master Tara Singh would have been here. I know his views and he has his 17 points to pit against Mr. Jinnah's 14, but I am quite sure I could bear him down, as he is after all a comrade in arms. Is it surprising then that we should fail to achieve a settlement in the present atmosphere? It is, therefore, I said, that having already handicapped us, do not handicap us more by saying that the solution of the Communal problem must precede any decision on the Constitutional question. I tell them, let us know what we are going to get, so that on that basis I might endeavour to bring about unity even in the present illassorted group. Let us have something tangible. It would be another string to the bow and help us to arrive at a solution. For I could tell them that they were dashing a precious thing to pieces. But today, I have nothing to present them with. And even if there were no solution I have suggested various ways—private arbitration, Judicial tribunal, etc. That is the situation.

May I take it then that you do not attach much importance to the Communal question?

I have never said so. I say that the question has been allowed to overshadow the main thing, which needs to be specially emphasied.

* *

Perhaps the most direct questions were asked at the American Journalists' vegetarian Luncheon at Savoy Hotel. It was in the fitness of things that the luncheon should have been strictly vegetarian (without meat, fish, or eggs) and Gandhiji, in thanking them for it, described it as a delicate courtesy. He regaled them for some minutes with stories as to how journalists had misquoted him and how in one instance a misrepresentation had nearly cost him his life. He commended them the motto of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and answered questions as they were asked. One would have thought they would ask questions of a general nature and of universal interest, but they were too full of their present immediate surroundings to want to travel out of them.

Are you hopeful of a successful outcome?

Being an optimist, I never lose hope, but I can say that I am no nearer a solution than I was in Bombay. There are numerous difficulties. I know that the Congress demand appears a little too high in the atmosphere that is found to exist here, though I think that is none too high.

Is there no way out of the difficulty?

There are many ways, but whether they will be adopted by the parties concerned, I do not know. We have been told that the solution of the Constitutional question depends on the solution of the Communal question. It is not true, and I am afraid, it is the very

presentation of the question in this inverted form that has made the question more difficult and given it an altogether artificial importance, and because it has been made the fulcrum the parties concerned feel that they can pitch their demands as high as possible. And thus, we are moving in a hideously vicious circle and the task of peace becomes more and more difficult. But I, for the life of me, see no vital connection at all between the two questions. India will have freedom whether the communal question is solved or not solved. No doubt we would have difficult times after the attainment of freedom, but freedom itself cannot be held up by the question, for we can get freedom as soon as we are worthy of it and being worthy of it means suffering enough for it, paying a rich price for the rich prize of freedom. But if we have not suffered, if we have not paid the price, even a solution of the question would be of no help to us. If we have suffered enough, and offered sufficient sacrifices, no argument or negotiation would be necessary. But who am I to determine that we have suffered enough. In the hope that we had suffered enough I came here and I am not at all sorry that I came here, for I find that my work lies outside the Conference and that is why in spite of my numerous engagements I agreed to come here, for this I regard as part of my work.

Does not the General Election make your work difficult?

In Britains' Interests

IT NEED NOT. If British statesmen realised that the financial situation would be more difficult if there were a war between England and India, however non-violent, they would not allow the general election to hamper the solution of our problem. They must

realise that in case India's demands are not granted, there is bound to be a fierce boycott, and all the attention of Great Britain will have to be absorbed in looking after her quickly-perishing trade interest in India. On the contrary, if there is an honourable partnership, Great Britain would be more free to mend her own affairs. But there is another very great difficulty in our way. So long as India is held by the bayonet the British ministers will continue to cast their hungry eyes on the famishing masses of India and forging fresh means of draining the last ounce of silver and gold from India not necessarily by a malicious design, but forced by the necessity of the case, for when there is unemployment and want stalking the land and there is a chance of relief from some direction, no matter whether it is by exploiting another country, you cannot expect the statesmen to weigh every thing in golden scales, and model their conduct on a strictly ethical code. It will drive them to desperate measures like manipulating India's currency. That may for a time put off the agony, but the ultimate doom cannot long be delayed.

* *

With Youth

AT THE GOWER Street Indian Students' meeting there was an Indian atmosphere — Indian national songs and our national anthem, which we heard here for the first time, (we had our prayers at the meeting which offered a congenial atmosphere)—and perfect dignity and decorum. Another meeting, where a negro student from the Gold Coast, a Russian student, a Korean student and an English student asked questions—and many more would have asked, had there been time—was characterised by a spirit of search for truth which charmed Gandhiji, who simply let himself go and gave

some of the soul-stirring messages on the implications of truth and love in the present industrial age. He felt at both the functions that he was amongst his own dear boys and felt like leaving for them a message they would treasure and translate in their lives. What could be more penetrating than the following, which came after a preface indicating how the Congress had renounced the age worn method of inflicting injury on others and adopted the method of inflicting injury on oneself to achieve freedom, and how having gone through a course of suffering the country had deputed him as its sole representative in the hope that "the suffering India had gone through, had created sufficient impression on the minds of the British ministers and the British mind generally so that there might be a little room left for argument, reason, discussion and negotiation," and how he was trying every means in his power to prevent a cataclysm in India with all its frightful consequences.

A Hope

"IT MAY BE," he said, referring to the out-of-the Conference-work that he was doing, "that the seed which is being sown now may result in softening the British spirit and that it may result in the prevention of the brutalisation of human beings. I have known the English nature in its hideous form in the Punjab. I have known it elsewhere also, during these fifteen years of experience and through history, I have known the same thing happening. It is my purpose by every means at my command to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. I am more concerned in preventing the brutalisation of human nature than in preventing the sufferings of my own people. I have often gloated over the sufferings of my own people. I

know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people who become brutalised in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see human nature dragged in the mire. If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being, how much more so in Englishmen, amongst whom I count numerous friends! I invite you to give all the help you can in the endeavour that I am making.

A Task for Students

"TO THE INDIAN Students my appeal is to study this question in all thoroughness and if you really believe in the power of non-violence and truth, then for God's sake express these two thing in your daily life—not merely in the political field—and you will find that whatever you do in this direction will help me in the struggle. It is possible that Englishmen and Englishwomen who come into close touch with you will assure the world that they have never seen students so good, so truthful, as Indian students. Don't you think that that would go a long way towards vindicating our nation? The words "self-purification" occurred in a Congress Resolution in 1920. From that moment the Congress realised that we were to purify ourselves. We were by self-sacrifice to purify ourselves so that we would deserve liberty and so that God would also be with us. If that is

the case, every Indian whose life bears testimony to the spirit of self-sacrifice helps his country, without having to do anything more. Such in my opinion, is the strength of the means which the Congress adopted. Therefore, in the battle for freedom, every student here need do nothing more than that he should purify himself and present a character above reproach and above suspicion."

The reader will notice the vision of a Ganges of self-suffering is growing upon Gandhiji more and more and there is not a meeting where he does not share with his hearers the echoes he hears from the innermost Deep of the coming storm. I shall cull some of the questions and answers for the readers.

(*At the National Labour Club Reception.*) *Are you not indicating a tendency to bellicose Nationalism? And do you not think it would be a dangerous ideal to sacrifice a million lives in order to attain freedom?*

Price of Liberty

I DO NOT think it to be a dangerous ideal to sacrifice one's own life, and these precious lives will be sacrificed by a nation that is living in compulsory disarmament. India, you must remember, is wedded to non-violence and, therefore, there is no question of taking someone else's life. We do not consider our lives so cheap as to be given away for nothing, but we do not consider our lives to be dearer than liberty itself, and therefore, we had to sacrifice a million lives, we would do so tomorrow, and God above would say nothing but "Well done my children." We are trying to gain our liberty; you on the other hand have been an Imperialistic minded race. You have been in the habit of committing frightfulness — and as the late General Dyer put it in answer to a question by the

Hunter Commission; 'Yes, I did this frightfulness deliberately.' I am here to say that General Dyer was not the only one capable of resorting to this frightfulness. We can reverse the process and sacrifice ourselves in the attempt to gain our liberty. It is up to you, those who are trustees of the honour of the British nation, to prevent this disaster if you can.

Would we not be making a mistake in giving you independence?

I THINK YOU will if you *give* independence to anyone. And please, therefore, remember that I have not come to beg for independence, but I have come as a result of last year's suffering and at the end of that suffering, time came when we left India in order to see whether we have now sufficiently impressed the British mind with our suffering, so that I can go away with an honourable settlement. But if I go away with the an honourable settlement, I shall not go away with the belief that I have received any *gift* from this nation. There is no such thing as a gift of independence from one nation to another. It has got to be gained and bought with one's blood and I feel that we have already spilt sufficient of our own blood in the process which has gone on deliberately since 1919. But it may be that in God's Grace He considers that we have not suffered enough, that we have not gone through the process of purification. Then, I am here to testify that we shall continue the process of self-sacrifice until at last no Britisher will want to remain in India as a ruler.

Gift or a Birthright

Lord Irwin is reported to have said in a speech at the Central Hall that he knew you would not insist on complete independence. Is this true?

Well, in the first instance, I do not know that Lord Irwin made the speech which is imputed to him. Secondly, I must not speak for Lord Irwin. That would be a question well addressed to him. But I never told Lord Irwin that I would not press for complete independence. On the contrary, so far as my memory serves me right, I told him that I would press for complete independence and for me that does not mean ruling India through deputies, *i. e.* Indian agents rather than English agents. Complete independence to me means National Government.

How do you reconcile complete independence with the retention of British troops?

British Troops and the Viceroy

BRITISH TROOPS may remain in India and that would depend upon the arrangement that the partners came to. This, for a limited period, would be to the interest of India because India has become emasculated and it is necessary to retain some portion of British troops or some portion of British officers under the National Government and in the employ of the National Government. I shall defend the partnership and yet defend the retention of those troops.

Do you envisage a Viceroy when you speak of an independent India?

Whether the Viceroy remains is a question to be decided by both the parties. Speaking for myself, I cannot conceive a Viceroy remaining. But I can conceive a British agent remaining there because there would be so many interests which the British have brought into being there which I personally do not seek to destroy and in order to represent those

interests and if there is also an army consisting of British troops and officers I could not possibly say "No, there will not be a British Agent." And since there are also the Princes concerned I cannot vouchsafe for what the Princes will do and, therefore, I do not expect that under the scheme I have in mind there will be no British agent there—whether he is called a Viceroy or a Governor-General. But I would defend it as a partnership having the condition that it is to be terminated at the will of either on terms of absolute equality. I am writing on a slate from which I have to rub out many things.

What are the common objects that such a partnership would advance?

The common object that the partnership is going to advance is to cease the exploitation of the races of the earth. If India becomes free from this curse of exploitation, under which she has groaned for so many years, it would be up to India to see that there is no further exploitation. Real partnership would be of mutual benefit. It would be a partnership between two races the one having been known for its manliness, bravery, courage and its unrivalled powers of organisation, and the other an ancient race possessing a culture perhaps second to none, a continent in itself. A partnership between these two people cannot but result in mutual good and be to the benefit of mankind.

VII

ASK ALL Englishmen to study the case for India and if they feel that my position is correct they must render all the assistance they can in order to make the R. T. C. proceed to a successful issue," said Gandhiji in the Church House at a meeting presided over by the Archibishop of York and attended by most of the important Bishops and Church dignitaries of England. "But," he added, "I see no hope. Lord Sankey is marking time, and today we are no nearer success, no nearer even to the great issue, *viz.*, 'Is or is not India going to get complete independence, is or is not India going to get full control over her defence, finance and external affairs?' We have not even discussed these things. We have been spending all our time in discussing things of a second-rate or even of third-rate importance. The communal question, which is said to bar the progress, should not have been used for that purpose."

The R. T. C. Wanderings

"I am up against a blind wall," he said to a friend.

"Is it not unfortunate that though you represent a strong body of opinion you are not today the leader of a united India?"

"I am not. But that is because unity is impossible here. Don't you see it is a packed Conference? If we had been asked to elect our own representatives I should have represented and spoken for them all, excepting, of course, the princes who cannot speak except as vassals of the Government on whose sufferance they live. Whereas, we have here today

Musalmans talking as ultraloyalists who only a little while ago were intolerable even of British connection under any terms."

"Then what the *Daily Herald* said is true?"

"No, I think the Prime Minister is right in saying that the Government are not trying deliberately to break up the Conference. But they might have to wind it up for the simple reason that they cannot, in all decency, prolong the agony. For it is nothing less. We have been talking and talking about points which do not touch the fundamentals. What is the use of discussing allocation of finance between the Federation and the Provincial Government, when we do not know what finance we will have, what authority we are going to exercise and what army we shall have to pay for."

That, I think, describes the situation to-day pretty correctly. And he made it abundantly clear at the Round Table Conference too. He minced no matters during the discussion on the Supreme Court at the Federal Structure Committee. He warned them to get out of the broken track—thinking always in terms of the Crown, and an India paying heavy salaries starving her poor as at the present day. The Congress can have nothing to do with any arrangement which, however, unexceptionable its name, assumes the British control and British supremacy in any shape or form. If they meant business, they must think in the terms of an independent India having her own independent Court, composed of Judges whom she would pay according to her own purse, and a real bulwark of the liberties of her people. It was an important and fearless pronouncement, as Lord Sankey was good enough to characterise it. This is bound to clear the air and make people think — at least those who like Lord Sankey like straight talking from one "who

knows what he wants." Meanwhile, vile propaganda is being carried on to discredit the Congress and the Congress representative, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru sends a long cable describing the U. P. situation. Gandhiji in reply just says that the Pandit might unhesitatingly take whatever steps he felt necessary to meet the situation, as nothing was possible at this end. Interested papers get at the news, by fair means or foul and produce a monstrous distortion, *viz* that Mr. Gandhi is asking Jawaharlal to start a campaign of civil disobedience. Quite on a par with *Pioneer's* stunt that Mr. Gandhi was trying to bribe the Musalmans in order to get their support in a non-cooperation campaign!

Prohibition

AT A MEETING of the temperance workers presided over by Lord Rochester every one of the three to four hundred friends seemed to realise the enormity of England's crime in forcing drink on an unwilling people in India. "There is no other country in the world which is trying to achieve prohibition by voluntary effort and in the teeth of opposition from Government, where vast masses of people are crying for prohibition and they are denied it and where drink is even being encouraged in all sorts of insidious ways," said Gandhiji and they seemed to understand it instinctively, if I may judge from the tributes paid to him at the end of the speech. "The problem of prohibition is incredibly simple, but for the wretched question of revenue" said Gandhiji and they saw how essential it was for India to have complete control of finance if she should balance the budget and yet go in for complete prohibition.

VIII

Effects of General Election

SO FAR AS OUR country is concerned the change in the Government does not make our case better or worse. Let us not forget that the worst horrors including *lathi* charges on women—never known before in the history of India—were perpetrated during the Labour regime. What worse can happen under the Conservatives? A liberal use of gunpowder? It would be ever so much cleaner and more straightforward than a cowardly *lathi* charge.

The panicky election, or the "safety first" election, as a lady put it, and the financial crisis in England and Europe have a meaning which is neatly summed up by Sir William Layton: "It is no longer possible for any debtor country to settle the problem of repayment by its own action. Creditor countries must decide whether they are willing to receive payment in the form of goods or whether they prefer to scale down debts. If every country simply takes its own measures to restrict imports it will gradually strangle exports from every source and finally end in the paralysis of all international trade."

Another writer analyses the election results in a way which India will understand very well: "Convince John Bull that his country is threatened with any fundamental danger; let him once believe that some sinister force is at work to confiscate his savings, to undermine the Bank of England (which to him is the Rock of Ages) and, therefore, to destroy a system which connotes his assurances and material security

and all his hopes of material advance — and John Bull rises in his slow might and once again leaves the world agape."

India will not miss the obvious lesson. John Bull, when the next occasion in India comes — as it threatens to come soon — can easily be made to visualise a fundamental danger, if only we have the will, and then he will leave the world agape by asking his ministers to make peace with India.

Foolish Hindus!!

"WHY DO HINDUS want joint electorates?" was a question put by some of the students at Oxford. Answer (midst roars of laughter) — "Because they are foolish. They can take the wind out of the sails of Musalmans by immediately giving them separate electorates and leaving them wondering whether there may not be after all something sinister in the separate electorates."

"Why are you so uncharitable to those who drink?" asked an English student.

"Because I am charitable to those who suffer from the effects of the curse."

So many are puzzled and perplexed that he can keep his temper in the midst of numerous engagements lasting from morning until midnight. "Do you ever suffer from nerves?" asked Mrs. Eustace Miles. "Ask Mrs. Gandhi," straight came the reply, leaving her admiring his humour still more, "she will tell you that I am on my best behaviour with the world but not with her." "Well," said Mrs. Miles, "My husband is on his best behaviour with me."

"Then" retorted Gandhiji, "I am sure that Mr. Miles has bribed you heavily."

"Is not the Charkha a medaeval device?"

"We were doing many things in the middle ages which were quite wise. But if most of us have given them up, why accuse me of my wisdom? However medaeval the device may be, I am not ashamed of adding thereby fifty per cent to the income of my impoverished villagers. During the war you produced potatoes and fashionable ladies of Lyceum Club invited men to stitch sleeping suits for the soldiers with plain needle and thread. Was it not medaeval? Well, I learnt the medaeval trick from the ladies of the Lyceum Club."

But often enough when the occasion arises he flares up and bursts into a blaze, even like the last Satyagraha movement which sprang up so suddenly and so unexpectedly.

"What is the chief obstacle in the way of Swaraj?"

Chief Obstacle to Swaraj

IT IS THE UNWILLINGNESS of the British officials to part with power; or our incapacity to wrest power from unwilling hands. Well, you feel sorry that I have not given you the expected reply. I want you to understand that we can wrest power inspite of our disunion, and if the hands which have to yield power were willing our disunion would soon disappear. You say the British are impartial onlookers! Well, I have had the audacity of accusing the Government of India of acting like a wedge and of accusing the British Government with having appointed a packed Conference. We have our own communal solution arrived at by the Congress with enlightened Musalmans. But, if unfortunately, some Musalmans, claiming to represent a majority, are not satisfied, and because of that the Government will say

that they would hold on the chains they have thrown round us, I say that we shall simultaneously strike a blow to break both the chain and the disunion." And then at the reception of the Commonwealth of India League:

"The best way is for Englishmen to withdraw from India and let her manage or mismanage, her affairs as England is doing. But in India, Englishmen are like jailors dictating to the Indians the rules of good behaviour and India is one vast prison house. Well, we shall have to render account of ourselves, and you too. The best thing for you would be to end this unnatural relationship. God willing, we are going to take this freedom from unwilling hands. I had thought we had suffered enough, but I find that our sufferings are not vital and real enough to make themselves felt and I shall have to go to India and ask my countrymen to go through the fiery ordeal in a more intense form than last year. Chittagong and Hijli are beacon-lights to me warning me to return to India. But I must be patient, and suppress my anger. I do sometimes become extremely angry with myself but I also pray to be delivered from that devil and God has given me power to suppress my anger. But anger or no anger I shall not suddenly leave England. I shall wait, watch and pray. But, if ultimately the R. T. C. breaks down I know what we shall do. I know then that we shall not be found wanting and then it will be your time to come to our help.

IX

Mr. Bernard Shaw had long been wanting to see Gandhiji, and it was not without considerable hesitation that he came. He sat with Gandhiji for close on an hour, interrogating him on a bewildering variety of topics—ethnographical, religious, social, political, economical,—and his talk was illumined by his sparkling wit and sardonic humour. 'I knew something about you and felt something in you of a kindred spirit. We belong to a very small community on earth,' said he. Whilst his other questions were of universal importance, he could not help asking a question about the R. T. C. 'Does not the Round Table Conference try your patience?" he asked, and Gandhiji had to confess with sorrow: "It requires more than the patience of a Job. The whole thing is a huge camouflage and the harangues that we are treated to are meant only to mark time. Why not, I ask them, make a clean breast and announce your policy and let us make our choice? But it does not seem to be in the English political nature to do so. It must go by round about and tortuous ways!"

G. B. S.

Some will say the reception at Buckingham Palace was an important event. Well, with all repect to Their Majesties, I cannot say so. Do these receptions mean anything? Do Their Majesties *meet* people in the real sense of the term? Do they transact any business? Can they? Or is it not more or less like a pantomime

H. M. The King

show? And yet, some one will say, Gandhiji went there. Why did he? If it were so meaningless, why did he not abstain from it? Shall I try to give the readers an inkling of his state of mind? He described it at the Friends' meeting, "I am here," he said, "in an embarrassing position. I have come as the guest of this nation and not as the elected representative of my own nation. I must, therefore, walk warily and I cannot tell you how warily I am walking. Do you think I relished the Prime Minister's minatory speech in the Minorities' Committee? I would have repudiated it there and then, but I sat mum. I came home and wrote a letter of gentle reproach. And now, this week, I am faced with a moral problem. I have an invitation to attend His Majesty's reception. I am feeling so heart-sick and sore over the happenings in India that I have no heart in attending such functions, and if I had come in my own right I should not have hesitated to come to a decision. But, as I am a guest, I am hesitating; I can do nothing hastily. I have every moment to consider the morality of the thing and not the legality." And, it is the morality of the thing that decided him to go, and when he did so, he wrote a courteous letter to the Lord Chamberlain thanking him for the invitation and intimating to him that he and his companion (who had also been invited) would attend the reception in their usual dress. He usually excuses himself from all social functions, but he had to make an exception in favour of this as in some others, as he would do nothing which would be regarded in the nature of a discourtesy. He would not refrain from doing anything that might be turned against him.

X

"AT THE PRESENT moment the Conference seems to have fizzled out and there seems to be no ray of hope in the impenetrable gloom. But some of your great men are trying their best to avoid a catastrophe. If they fail and if the Conference ultimately ends in a fiasco, as I fear it will, there will be thousands upon thousands ready to go through the fire of suffering, and will not quail before the fiercest repression. We are promised that the repression that is coming will be ten times as fierce as last year's. But I shall pray that humanity may be spared that exhibition of brute power."

What next ?

I am quoting these words from Gandhiji's concluding remarks at the Westminster School on the evening of the day on which he made his third memorable pronouncement at the Round Table Conference. The speech was invited by an elaborate communal solution pretending almost to represent an agreement between Musalmans, Depressed classes, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans, claiming to represent 46 per cent of British India. There was somthing palpably unseemly about this stupendously audacious creation of the nominated representatives of their respective communities. There were immediately loud protests against it, the fiercest being Sirdar Ujjal Singh's, inasmuch as he called a spade a spade and described the attempt in effect as a secret conspiracy to divide somebody else's property. When Gandhiji rose in holy wrath and exposed it as an outrage upon the

nation, it gasped its last breath. But he not only laid the spectre, he exposed the wickedly absurd claims of the authors of the scheme to represent the communities for which they dared to speak.

It must have been an eye-opener for the Prime Minister. The *New Statesman* almost paraphrases Gandhiji's language when in its today's issue it says: "No one representing a sectional interest, Hindu, Moslem or Sikh, cares to put his name to concessions on the communal question, when he does not know whether anything is going to eventuate with regard to the main problem of the future Constitution." It adds: "There is no real reason to let the Conference fail. If a policy of drift is adopted it will be done deliberately, because the National cabinet has decided that such is the best course." It is something that Gandhiji's ceaseless efforts to educate the British public have disabused, at least the saner elements of it, some of the officially cooked conceptions, and when the Conference comes to a sorry close within a few days no one can seriously maintain that the obstacle was offered by the delegates themselves.

The Prime Minister put up a halting defence in the shape of a plea that the safeguards had not been discussed because a suggestion had been made by the Federal Structure Committee itself that consideration of them should be postponed. There was a chorus of protest against this statement and he had immediately to admit that the suggestion was made by a section of the Committee. If indeed he insisted, as he did this morning, on a unanimous request by the delegates to him to settle the question, he should have similarly insisted on a unanimous request to postpone consideration of the Constitutional question. One cannot

think of a more pitiful exposure of the hollowness of the Government's position than was made this morning by several factors, including the Prime Minister's own admission.

That, however, is neither here not there. The fact stands that we are on the brink of a big catastrophe of which the horrors only those can visualise who have imposed upon themselves the method of achieving emancipation by voluntary suffering. And yet, as Gandhiji said to an interviewer late tonight, "there would be inevitable recrudescence of civil disobedience on the failure of the Conference on the Constitutional issue. There can be no other way. For, if we do not get it today, it means postponement for an indefinite period. There is not much ground for hope, though I cannot say I have given up all hope of a solution being reached at the eleventh hour. And I, for myself shall not rest until every avenue has been explored."

Congress represents the Masses

HE WHO STUDIES Gandhiji's speech will clearly see what are the immediate obstacles in our way. The discussions among our ranks are obvious enough — we have all been stupid as he has more than once said. But Government prepared the ground for our dis-union and took steps to perpetuate the dissension by all the ingenuity of a powerful party reluctant to surrender power. The Congress is the nation, and the only majority Community, competent to deliver the goods, and the Government should have treated with the Congress after hearing all other parties. But, obviously, Congress has not been able to impress Government with its importance and its claim to speak for the whole of the country. "I shall

then go back and demonstrate by dint of more suffering that the Congress alone represents the vast masses of India."

But the real and ultimate obstacle, as Gandhiji explained to the students of the London School of Economics, is "the colossal and appalling ignorance of the best of Englishmen about conditions in India. We are supposed to be ungrateful fellows oblivious of the many good things that the British had done for India. It is not only the official mind that thinks so, but others capable of moulding public opinion think so." There is another thing. Long ago the late Surrendranath Bannerji had described a peculiarly British trait. "I am always being asked by Englishmen why, if there were such poverty in India, there were no insurrections, no breaking of windows, no riots." And the present day Englishmen too seems to be pretty nearly of the same mind. He is slow to understand the non-violent method. Well, he possibly needs a much more effective demonstration than last years. The danger of foreign invasions and internal strifes has been so sedulously worked up that it has become an honest belief with an average Englishman that India cannot live without the protection of the British bayonet. To a certain extent, it is the pride of the ruling race which arrogates to itself certain privilges, while it denies to the ruled the most elementary ones. On walls in every street, on shop windows, in railway trains and buses and on the pages of newspaper you find appeals to the British public to buy British to the exclusion of everything foreign. But "buy exclusively Indian." is evidently a seditious and dangerous cry in India. A lady, in an exceptionally well-informed gathering, seriously questioned the right of a people who were fighting

amongst one another to think of liberty. "You must deserve to be free" is the pedantic cry.

BUT I SHALL not discuss all the varieties of ignorance of facts or knowledge of false history, and the prejudices of the ruling race. They are inevitable in those who regard themselves as conquerors. It is only he who has been under the harrow that can understand one in a similar position. J. Devlin, the Irish patriot, at a meeting Gandhiji was informally addressing, put the freedom lover's case pointedly: "You are asking us to study Indian conditions. Well, it does not require any study to accept a nation's right to freedom. It is its inherent right." And Gandhiji adds point to it by saying that it is not only our birthright, but that we have earned it by right of suffering.

The Inherent Right

But, evidently, the British public needs more education in the shape of voluntary suffering. He has met a few thousand Britishers by now and has tried to din it into their heads that with the best of intentions in the world the British rule in India has been a curse and we must get rid of it. The education has not been without effect, but it is a slow process, and outrageously slow when the people in India are dying an ignominious death by inches, as is evident from reports from Bengal, U. P., and Bardoli. Therefore Gandhiji has said from one platform after another that the sacrifice of a million lives is infinitely preferable to the death by inches that the millions are undergoing. "I cannot live without unceasingly thinking of their deliverance. The only restriction is that we shall not soil our fingers with the blood of our opponents and we will not descend to untruth. We have burnt our boats. We are fighting with our backs to the

wall, and there is no rest for us unless vital freedom for the villagers of India is won."

XI

THE ROUND TABLE Conference has been the subject of all kinds of similes. Some have compared it to a carcase which was sought to be kept alive with oxygen. Some have likened it to a drowned person rescued and being revived with artificial respiration. Some even thought that the Conference was dead and that the Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor were casting about how best to give it a decent burial. I think the most accurate thing would be to say that those in charge of the Conference are awaking to essentials at the eleventh hour, having all these weeks deliberately shut their eyes to them. For one reason or another they had chosen to walk round and round without any desire to get to the centre. As Mr. Wedgwood Benn said, "We had reached the very last meeting of the Federal Structure Committee without approaching the centre of the problem." Or as Mr. Brailsford has put it more vividly: "Matters of secondary importance it had been permitted to debate with tedious completeness. All were agreed that the Upper House of its Assembly shall have one hundred, and the Lower House two hundred members. But whether these three hundred persons will constitute a Parliament or a Debating Society is still in doubt, for no one knows whether, or when, or how far they may meddle with finance, the army or foreign policy."

Aimless R. T. C.

In his very first speech in the Federal Structure Committee Gandhiji had sounded a note of warning and on various subsequent occasions he had tried to rivet the attention of the Conference on the essentials and refused to discuss minor details. The unholy alliance between some of the delegates claiming to represent the Minorities and the Musalman delegates, and the Prime Minister's speech in winding up the Minorities' Committee marked the limit to which tinkering could go, and there was nothing for it but for Gandhiji to lash every one to a consciousness of their duty by that speech of devastating earnestness. Those who had called the Conference saw that they would put themselves completely in the wrong if they sent away the delegates back to India without having even heard them on the fundamental issues. I have already quoted from Mr. Benn's speech. Mr. Lees Smith supported him and, perhaps for the first time from the British side, reminded the Conference that the settlement between Lord Irwin and Gandhiji was one of the things which necessitated a discussion of the safeguards. "Is this a thing to be brought to an end," said Mr. Benn in a picturesque phrase, "with a Bradshaw in one hand and a stop-watch in the other?" The Prime Minister and Lord Sankey as well as the Musalmans had all to capitulate, however unwillingly, with the result that we are now in the heart and centre of discussions which ultimately concern the poor dumb millions of India. The Conference may thus be said to be at last awake to the essentials and whether the speeches that are being made from day to day will or will not have any material effect on the statement that the Prime Minister had promised to make, it is something that the British Government will have the people's case

put before them in as unequivocal a manner as possible.

The Fundamental Question

FOR THAT IS WHAT Gandhiji has done in two of the most characteristic speeches in the Federal Structure Committee. He made it clear, in a manner no one had done before, that every thing depended on the first premise you started with—whether or not it was right for Great Britain to occupy India, whether or not it was right for Great Britain to hold India today and to continue to hold India. And putting on behalf of the Congress the premise that it was wrong for Britain to occupy India and wrong to hold it, he had no difficulty in saying "emphatically that the whole of this Army should be disbanded, if it does not pass under our control." The fact is that there is on the side of Britain no genuine desire to transfer power, and amongst some of our own people no will to assume power and to use it wholly and solely in the interests of the dumb, down-trodden millions of India. That fact explains some of the speeches on both sides; as also the question by Lord Sankey whether India wants the British Army to be withdrawn: the halting and diffident nature of the speeches made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Sastri; and the considerable agitation and even storm that Gandhiji's speech on commercial discrimination has raised in our own ranks. For it was not only on commercial discrimination that he spoke, but he gave a picture of India under a Government which was to be of the people and for the people, India which was free not only of the exploitation of the foreigner but of the indigenous capitalist and Zamindar and of the intellectual and social aristocrat who equally with the

foreigner has up to now lived on the sweat of the poor man. It was, therefore, dubbed a Bolsevik speech but the Congress policy of non-violence isolates its ways from any other, but Gandhiji could not conceal from the Conference the fact that every interest not legitimately acquired or was inconsistent with the best interest of the nation stood in danger of judicial scrutiny and handling. That explains too the *Daily Mail's* poster "Send Mr. Gandhi home."

What then is in store for India? "Is the Conference certainly doomed to failure?" was a question put to Gandhiji today by the son of a prominent public man. "It is ungrateful," said Gandhiji, "to say so. But I see very little warrant for success." "Don't you think the Government having allowed the discussion will now do something? Will the change in the Government make any difference?" Gandhiji had no hesitation in summing up the position and replying to both the questions at the same time; "I expected them to do certainly better but I do not know that they have made up their minds to transfer power. As regards the two parties, I think for India it is 'six of the one and half a dozen of the other.' In fact, I am rather glad that I have to do with an overwhelmingly large Conservative majority. For I do not want to steal any thing from here. I want something large and good which poor people can easily see and understand and so it is best that I have to fight a strong party and win what I want from a strong party. What I want is a lasting thing. I do not want to dissolve the tie, but to transform it. The relationship between India and England, the basis of equal partnership can exist only if each does the common thing out of a consciousness of strength and not of weakness. And, therefore, I would love to feel that

during the Conservative regime we were able to convince the Conservatives that we were not unworthy opponents nor unworthy partners."

The crux, however, is the first premise, as I have already said. And on behalf of the British public the *Daily Mail* puts it thus: "Without India the British Commonwealth of Nations would fall to pieces. Commercially, economically, politically and geographically it is our grestest imperial asset. To imperil our hold on it would be the worst treason any Britisher could commit."

L. G.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE was good enough to invite Gandhiji to Churt. He sent his own car to take him and bring him back to London and was as charming and unreserved as one could be in his three hours' conversation with Gandhiji.

India's Women

THERE WERE requests from various Women's Organisations for an address by Gandhiji, but Miss Agatha Harrison combined them all into one and, under the auspices of the Women's Indian Council, invited Gandhiji to address a representative gathering of women in Morley College Hall. At this meeting Gandhiji took the opportunity of correcting various fantastic notions about the women of India and presented a vivid picture of the heroic part they had played during the last struggle. "They are perhaps in many ways superior to you," he said. "You had to go through untold suffering to win your suffrage. In India women got it for the asking. No hindrances have been placed in the way of their entering public life and the Congress

had not only women for its Presidents but had Mrs. Naidu as a member of its Cabinet. For several years, and during the last struggle when our organisations were declared illegal and those in charge of them put into prison, it was the women who came to the forefront, took the place of dictators and filled the jails. That, however, does not mean that they have not suffered at the hands of men. They have had their bitter cups to drink, but I have no hesitation in telling you that what you have read in Miss Mayo's book about India is 99 per cent untrue. I have read the book from cover to cover and as I finished it I exclaimed that it was verily a drain-inspector's report. Some of the things she has said are true, but her generalisations are absolutely false, and several statements in the book are pure figments of her imagination."

He then went on to describe how last year they came out of their homes in one mass and showed an awakening which was miraculous. They took part in processions, defied the law, and bore the *lathi*, without raising a little finger, without swearing at the police, and used their power of persuasion to wean the drunkard from drink and the sellers and purchasers of foreign cloth from it. It was not a learned woman like Sarojini Naidu but an unlettered woman who had borne *lathi* blows on her head which bled profusely whilst she stood unflinching, ordering her companions not to move from their posts, and converted the little town of Borsad into a Thermopylae. It was to these women that the last year's victory was mainly due.

There was little time for questions, but one or two that were asked were expressive of the anxiety with which they were watching the deliberations of the

Round Table Conference. "There is yet time for these two countries to remain united on terms of equality for the good of the world," Gandhiji said to them. "It would not satisfy my soul to gain freedom for India and not to help in the peace of the world. I have the conviction in me that when England ceases to prey upon India she will also cease to prey upon other nations. At any rate India will have no part in the blood guilt."

XII

DURING THE LAST few days Gandhiji has expressed himself on all the crucial questions of the hour at one meeting or another in London or other places. I propose to put all that he has said in the form of answers to questions, in his own language.

The Forum

Would you not use salt for taxing and balancing the budget? Would you not agree to the Federation having limitless powers to tax some articles including salt?

The Federation should have no right to tax salt. Not unless I wanted to commit the sin of taxing the poor would I think of balancing the budget by taxing salt. If you want to balance the budget why not cut down the military expenditure? It would be a crime against humanity to add to the already heavy burden of the poor Indian tax-payer. You may as well tax air and water and expect India to live.

* *

Nothing provokes Gandhiji more than what he has often called the colossal ignorance of India in England.

At a very influential gathering of Englishmen and Englishwomen, drawn from all parts of England and representing many institutions and many interests, he said: "Who is it that can say that you have conferred benefits on India? We or you? The toad beneath the harrow knows where the harrow pinches. A series of men, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Ranade, Gokhale — who used to dote on you, who were proud of British contact and of the benefits conferred by your civilisation — do you know that they are all agreed in saying that you have on the whole done harm to India? When you go, you will have left us an impoverished and emasculated people, and the shades of all who loved you will ask, what have you done during these years of tutelage? You must realize that we cannot afford to have doorkeepers at your rate of wages, for you are no better than doorkeepers and a nation with an income of two pence a day per head cannot pay those wages. I cannot too often repeat that whilst your Prime Minister's wage is 50 times your average income, the Viceroy of India draws 5,000 times the average income of an Indian. We are a weak nation you say. Well, we have stout hearts. The frail Indian women, unlettered and uneducated — no second or third editions of Mrs. Naidu — received *lathi* blows breast forward. We are not skilled in administration. Well, was it not Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman who said that good Government is no substitute for self-government? You, who are past masters in making mistakes, you, who in the language of Lord Salisbury know the art of blundering through to success, will not give us the liberty of making mistakes? We want complete freedom from alien control. The iron has entered the soul of thousands and thousands of men and women

who are impatient of alien control. We are impatient to gain this freedom, with your help, if you will without your help, if we must.

Service Criterion

AND WHAT IS this bugbear of the Minorities question? I cannot for the life of me understand it. You call Congress one of the many organisations or the biggest organisation. I say to you that the Congress is not only the biggest organisation, but it is the most predominant organisation, an organisation which alone has fought for freedom. It was at the call of the Congress that hundreds of villagers were nearly swept out of existence, crops worth thousands, burnt or sold for a song and lands worth lakhs confiscated and sold. Do you suppose we have gone through all this agony for a mess of pottage? The Congress, says the fable, is a Hindu organisation. Do you suppose all that fought and went to prisons and died last year were only Hindus? There were several thousands of Musalmans amogst them, and there were also Sikhs and Christians, Parsis and all. Do not talk of a majority or a minority community. The Congress alone is the biggest majority community. You want us to have regard to the claims of Minorities. Do you want the Congress to parcel out India in small sections for Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians, and among them I suppose Protestants and Catholics, and Europeans, and among them also Protestants and Catholics, and then as many subsections of Hindus as you please—Jains and Buddhists and Sanatanists and Samajists and so on? I, for one, will be no party to this heartless process of vivisection. Is that how you propose to make a nation by your policy of divide

and rule? The small Minorities have a perfect right to demand full civic rights. But don't encourage them to ask for separate representation. They can enter the legislatures by the open door of election. Why are Anglo-Indians afraid of their intersts being neglected? Because they are Anglo-Indians? No, they are afraid because they have not served India. Let them follow the example of the Parsis who have served India and who do not ask for separate electorates. That is because they know that they will be in legislature by sheer right of service. Dadabhai Naoroji's whole life was dedicated to the service of India and his four grand-daughters, all cultured and educated like any English girls, are slaving for the peasants of India. One of them was the dictator of a province and then she stood for election to provincial council she topped the polls. She is at the present moment spreading the cult of charkha among the Frontier Pathans and ruling their hearts. Let Anglo-Indians too enter the legislatures by the open door of service. And even so Englishmen. Is it not a shame that Englishmen will still claim privileges in a country they have helped to impoverish and claim separate elections in a poor nation's legislature? No, I will never be guilty of parcelling out my country to these groups. It will be nothing short of vivisection of a whole nation."

Mrs. Naïdu, who has in her somewhat of the ancient Roman dames' love for gladiatorial combats no less than their proverbial pride in their young children, introduced to Gandhiji the other day, a group of youngmen who were all more or less exiles from their mother country and were dreadfully in earnest. They took up a formidable array of questions which they had left with Gandhiji a few days back. Some of

these questions and Gandhiji's replies are reproduced below.

How exactly do you think the Indian Princes, Landlords, millowners and money-lenders and other profiteers are enriched.

At the present moment by exploiting the masses.

Can these classes be enriched without the exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants.

To a certain extent, yes.

Have these classes any social justification to live more comfortably than the ordinary worker and peasant who does the work which provides their wealth ?

Society

NO JUSTIFICATION. My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence, etc; therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less. People with talents will have more, and they will utilise their talents for this purpose. If they utilise their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State. Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms. I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the farther go to the common family fund. They would have their earnings only as trustees. It may be that I would fail miserably in this. But that is what I am

sailing for. And that is what is implied in the Declaration of Fundamental Rights too.

Don't you think that the Peasants and Workers are justified in carrying on a class war for economic and social emancipation so that they can be free once and for all from the burden of supporting parasitic classes in society?

No. I myself am carrying on a revolution on their behalf. But it is a non-violent revolution.

By your movement for the reduction of rents in the U. P. you may ameliorate the condition of the peasants, but you do not strike at the root of the system.

Yes. But you can't do everything at one and the same time.

How then will you bring about the trusteeship? Is it by persuasion?

Not merely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means. Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary — a non-violent revolutionary. My means are non-cooperation. No person can amass wealth without the cooperation, willing or forced, of the people concerned.

Who constituted the capitalists trustees? Why are they entitled to a commission, and how will you fix the commission.

They will be entitled to a commission because money is in their possession. Nobody constituted them trustees. I am inviting them to act as trustees. I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees *i. e.* owners, not in their own right, but owners, in the right of those whom

they have exploited. I will not dictate to them what commission to take, but ask them to take what is fair *e. g.* I would ask a man who possesses Rs. 100 to take Rs. 50 and give the other Rs. 50 to the workers. But to him who possesses Rs. 10,000,000 I would perhaps say take 1% for yourself. So you see that my commission would not be a fixed figure because that would result in atrocious injustice.

The Privileged Classes

THE MASSES DO not today see in landlords and other profiteers their enemy. But the consciousness of the wrong done to them by these classes has to be created in them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as their enemies, but I teach them that they are their own enemies. Non-cooperators never told the people that the British or Gen. Dyer were bad, but that they were the victims of a system. So that, the system must be destroyed and not the individual. That is the reason why British officials can live with impunity in a population so fired with the desire for freedom.

If you want to attack a system there can be no difference between an Indian Capitalist and an English Capitalist. Why do not you apply non-payment of taxes to Zemindars?

The Zemindar is merely a tool of a system. It is not necessary to take up a movement against them at the same time as against the British system. It is possible to distinguish between the two. But, we had to tell the people not to pay to the Zemindars, because, out of this money the Zemindars paid to the Government. But we have no quarrel with the Zemindars as such, so long as they act well by the tenants.

What is your concrete programme to put the peasant and worker in absolute power to decide his own destiny?

My programme is the programme I am working out through the Congress. I am convinced that as a result of it their position today is infinitely superior to what they had occupied within living memory. I don't now refer to their material condition, I refer to the immense awakening that has come among them and the consequent ability to resist injustice and exploitation.

How do you propose to relieve the peasantry of their debt of five hundred crores.

No one knows the exact amount of debt. Such as it is, if the Congress gets the power, the Congress will undertake the scrutiny of the so-called obligations of the peasantry as it insists with regard to the obligations of the incoming Indian Government to be taken over from the out-going alien Government.

* *

Equally characteristic was Gandhiji's reply to the next question, asking him why he had not demanded the inclusion in the R. T. C. of a representative of the Indian States Subjects and whether, if in a Federal India, the Indian States Subjects resorted to Civil Disobedience to secure their rights, Federal forces would be used to help the Princes suppress that rising. He would never use them or allow them to be used for suppression of Civil Disobedience in any walk of life, he replied, because he held Satyagraha to be a permanent Law of man's being which took the place entirely of violence which was the Law of the beast. As for the first question, it was not open to him, or

rather it would not have been consistent with the dignity of the Congress to demand the inclusion of any body in a Conference in the making of which it had no power. "I could not plead on behalf of the Congress" he explained, "and the Congress being an erstwhile rebel against the Government could not consistently entreat for, not for the inclusion of anybody in the Conference."

British Postal Union

WITHIN A FEW days of our arrival here a Postman hesitatingly approached Miraben for Gandhiji's autograph in a book of a unique character. It was divided into sections with pages given to soldiers, statesmen, scholars, humanitarians and philanthropists and every autograph (with a photograph) was given its proper place in the book. It was a matter of some surprise that the autograph book belonged to an enterprising postman, not the one who had come for the autograph, but one who had dedicated his life to the service of the lepers in India. We were naturally interested and heard from Mr. Gurr something about the activities of Mr. Cardinal, who, whilst he had gone soldiering in India, was inspired with a mission to serve the lepers in India. Having secured the autograph and established contact with us, Mr. Gurr would drop in now and again, tell us something about the activities of the Postal Union in Great Britain and send us copies of the Union's international organ, *The Post*. It was he who was instrumental in bringing about this meeting at the Union's headquarters.

Their office, their meeting-hall, the way in which they conducted the proceedings of the meeting, their speeches, would not even for a moment make you suspect that they were postmen. But they were

genuine honest postmen, who did their job and found time to interest themselves not only in their nation's affairs, but in those of oppressed nations like ours. There was no comparison between them and our "wretchedly paid, ignorant, exceedingly hard-worked postmen," as Gandhiji described them. The reason was obvious. The former belonged to a free nation, the latter belonged to a subject nation, and to drive the contrast home, Gandhiji told them that the proportion between an Indian postman's salary and the Post Master General's was the same as that between an average Indian's income and the Viceroy's. In the circumstances one could not dream of a fullfledged weekly like *The Post* being conducted by the postmen in India, or of a Union with a magnificient office, or of their subscribing money to carry on a leper asylum in India. "We had," said Gandhiji, "a Postmen's Union in India whose president was no less a man than the present President of the Congress, but which, from the very nature of things, existed merely to ventilate grievances."

Soldier Turned Philanthropist

WHILST SHARP contrasts like these whet your appetite for freedom and make you more and more determined not to rest till it is achieved, let me not in any way seem to detract from the great work the British postmen are doing, or from their courtesy in inviting Gandhiji to tell them something about Indian postmen, about Indian leper asylums, and about his mission in England. Mr. Gardinal, for whom Indian culture and Indian epics and Indian heroes and heroines, and even the Indian mountains and rivers, had an irresistible appeal, and who, as he said, though a soldier, lived in India with his eyes open, was

moved at the sight of a leper in Allahabad and decided to devote himself to the service of the lepers in India. On his return to England, he became a postman, narrated to his friends his experiences, and it was out of the contributions of postmen all over Great Britain that he was able to open a Leper Asylum in Madura. Twice since then, the Postal Department had granted him leave of absence for three months and he has seen the Asylum develop into a fair-sized colony under his very eyes. He has now retired from postal service, but not from the service of the lepers in India, and he is still carrying on his humanitarian work through voluntary annual contributions from the postmen in England.

The Union's interest in Indian postmen too is not negligible. The Chairman described the Union as an international one in outlook, though they had been prohibited from affiliating themselves with an International Union. But they were hoping that one day they may be part and parcel of a world-wide organisation. Their present membership is 100,000 and their journals (international and local) are distributed to every member.

It was to pay a compliment to their great organising skill and humanitarian work that Gandhiji readily agreed to pass an evening with them, and it is to enlist their sympathy for India that he introduced to them in vivid and graphic language the romance of the fight for freedom

EXCURSIONS

I

The visit to Chichester was trebly fruitful because of the contact established with three of the important men in England — Bishop Bell of Chichester and Canon Campbell, and Mr. C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*

Gandhiji had long and intimate talks with all the three who were glad to understand the Indian situation from Gandhiji at first hand.

The Bishop of Chichester

THE BISHOP is unlike many Churchmen that we have met before. There is no predominently religious 'air' about him. He talks most intelligently on any topic that you care to discuss and with a detachment that often puzzles you. He seems to have made up his mind about everything and though he disagrees with you does not allow you to feel that he does so. Quite a masterful personality capable of tackling with consummate skill affairs of the State. One might almost feel that he has mistaken his vocation, but one immediately realises one's mistake. There is a deep undercurrent of spirituality

in everything that he says or does, and his life is so simple that as Canon Campbell said of him 'our Bishop would be as happy in a hovel as in his Palace.' He was for many years tutor at Oxford and was a student at the same College as Lord Irwin. He has connections with him and a host of others who count, and I may say that not a minute of the hours spent with him by Gandhiji was wasted. "I am not prepared to believe that the Conference can break on the Minorities question" said he to me with considerable confidence. "A number of clergymen asked Mr. Gandhi a number of questions last night and when one of them said that he hoped that the question would be solved in India. Mr. Gandhi said that he was determined to solve it here. I think he will do it. His optimism is not of an empty kind." And the Bishop added: "I have had some very precious talk with Mr. Gandhi and have understood from him as much as a layman can understand, but I fear that he is more suspicious of some people than one ought to be. I am quite sure that the fears that there would be chaos and civil war in India if the English left the country are unfounded and the result of ignorance, but I may assure you that they are genuinely felt, and I wonder if something cannot be done to evolve a formula in the future constitution calculated to dispel those fears."

He has had long talks with Gandhiji and if anyone outside the Conference can exercise influence on the counsels of those concerned he is sure to do so.

"But supposing nothing happens," I said, "the visit will surely lead to a deeper understanding between India and England, and will be very helpful to the pacifists so far as their mission is concerned."

He was sure about the first part of my statement but not about the second part: "Why should not the

visit lead to anything more? And if it does not the future is uncertain. What can we do in Manchuria, though we know that something ought to be done there? I am quite sure that in case something happens in India, in the absence of a settlement, something must be done here. But I doubt that we would be equal to it. I wonder if the pacifists would know exactly what to do." He seemed to be more envious that the tragedy be averted than that it should be coped with.

"Who are the outstanding pacifists today?" I asked and he immediately named Albert Schweitzer and Romain Rolland. He was full of Dr. Schweitzer's latest book and said: "He is a great moral force. When I met him for the first time in France I was surprised to read on his card 'Doctor of Medicine,' 'Doctor of Theology,' 'Doctor of Music,' and after having had all these distinctions he decided that his work lay in the forests of Africa amid danger and death." "And the most unattractive type of danger and death," said Mr. Bell, to bring out the heroic selflessness of Dr. Schweitzer most vividly. Among the English pacifists he named Dr. Maude Royden and Arthur Ponsonby and some of the members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. "Mr. H. G. Wells and Bertrand Russell are pacifists but not the moral forces we are thinking of," he had no hesitation to add.

Canon Campbell

CANON CAMPBELL is a different man. He is in no way inscrutable and his learning and culture overflow like a mountain spring. He has read deeply and widely, as any great preacher of his renown should do, and he has found numerous meeting grounds in Eastern philosophy. Dr. Tagore's writing have

left an abiding impression on him and his heart hankers after a quiet contemplative kind of life, though he gave rude shocks to theologians by raising fierce controversies some years ago. He was deeply interested in getting at the root meaning of 'Swaraj' and when Gandhiji traced it to its source which he said was self-purification and self-sacrifice the Canon was mightily pleased and said: "That is the essence of all great religions." He is sick of the "explosive onrush of modern science" and feels that what we are suffering from is a secular outlook in all our affairs. He has the deepest sympathy for the Indian Cause and was overjoyed that his meeting with Gandhiji meant nothing less than the spirit reaching out to spirit.

A Veteran Journalist

THE VISIT TO the veteran journalist, Mr. C. P. Scott, was in the nature of a pilgrimage, as Gandhiji himself described it. Having been in editorial charge of the *Manchester Guardian* for fifty years, he retired at the age of 83 in 1929. He is thus 85 now, but has the vigour of a young man of 20 as we could see from his firm and steady step as he ran up and down his staircase to get his overcoat. He is enjoying his well-earned rest in his sister's house at Bognor on the South Coast of England, which acquired a special celebrity by the King having had his last convalescence there. And there we met him with his sister who is 97, with all her faculties unimpaired, excepting for a slight deafness, and even her countenance was unwrinkled. She seemed to be interested in everything and regarded Gandhiji's visit as an important event in her life. "I have your blessings on my mission, I hope," said Gandhiji to her as we were leaving and she cordially said, "Oh yes; you have."

With Mr. Scott Gandhiji had a long talk. He did not want to worry him with any argument or raise a discussion. " This is purely a pilgrimage. For years your paper has been an oasis in a desert of misunderstanding and misrepresentation and I .thought I must see you if only to express my greatfulness," said Gandhiji as the old man came forward to greet him. He took him to a glass room at the back of the house designed to let in a flood of sunshine .from all directions and there they chatted away whilst Charlie Andrews and I watched and listened from an adjoining room. Mr. Scott seemed to be quite in touch with the current events and knew that Gandhiji had said at one of the meetings here that the sum total of British rule in India had not been to India's benefit. So Mr. Scott asked, " Don't you think it is due to British rule that there is unity in India?" "Yes; it is a unity superimposed by the British rule. The result is that we have numerous disruptive forces coming up to the surface at the critical moment as we find now. Mr. Macdonald resented the suggestion but I have no doubt that the the solution of the communal question would not have been difficult if we had on the Conference men truly representative of India. Everyone, as Sir Ali Imam said, owes his place to the will of the Prime Minister, and even assuming that the same men would have come in, had they been elected by the nation, they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility than they are doing today. As a matter of fact men from ridiculously small Minorities have been selected and they are said to represent so many communities and they can put all sorts of obstacles in the way."

But I shall not traverse the whole argument and, indeed, as I have said before, nothing was put forward before the old veteran as an argument. He thought

of his past, crowded with events, recalled veterans like Gladstone "with beautiful dark eyes full of sweetness and fire," and Campbell-Bannerman who had for all time left the impress of his statesmanship on history, recounted the great part this statesman had played at the time of framing the South African Constitution and seemed to sigh for men of that heroic type.

II

At the Nursery of The Empire Builders

ETON IS MORE or less a stronghold of Conservatism or rather Imperialism, where the sons of the upper middle class learn how "to bear a man's part in subduing the earth, ruling its wild folk and building the Empire" to use the words of Rev. Papillon. The existence of the Eton Public School has been for "four and a half centuries part and parcel of England's progress and prosperity." It is the pride of Eton to have given to England Prime Ministers like Gladstone, Salisbury, Rosebery and Balfour and to have sent to India Viceroys like Wellesley, Metcalfe, Auckland, Ellenbrough, Canning, Elgin, Dufferin, Landsdowne, Curzon and Irwin and as many Governors. Their Eton training is regarded with pride as having "helped them to administer the affairs of the great dependency in some cases at the risk, or even actual cost, of their lives." Great Generals like Wellington, Roberts and Buller were all Etonians and the Etonian is taught that "wherever the flag of England has waved in battle there many Etonians have laid down their lives for their country." "Everyday at Eton," says an Eton enthusiast, "is forming a great man and

furnishing material for the future history of the country."

Where the English upper class son is nurtured on this tradition it must have been no easy thing for the authorities to permit the elders among the boys to invite a rebel against the Empire, like Gandhiji, and for the Head Master to put him up in his ancient mansion, 500 years old. Whilst we were grateful for the invitation and for the Head Master's great hospitality, I think it is but the truth to say that the invitation was meant to be for the boys a further lesson in imperialism. The Eton boy has the advantage of a library, well-stocked with some 25,000 books, but the Indian history he learns is the traditional Indian history and perhaps this visit was meant to be an object lesson to show that the Indian is incapable of governing India which must still remain a dependency. We were among 50 boys who form the Club and rather than make a speech before them Gandhiji invited them to ask him questions and have a heart to heart chat. No fear. They had but one question, or to be precise, two questions, to ask and it looked as though they were forbidden to move out of that charmed circle. "Mr. Shaukat Ali gave us the Muslim case. Will you give us the Hindu case?" said the Chairman and when Gandhiji asked them to put questions, this very question was repeated by one of the boys. What a contrast to the poor East End boys who bombarded Gandhiji with questions about his home, his dress, his sandals, and his language! But those poor folks are to be no Empire builders.

However that may be, Gandhiji took up the challenge and gave them an answer for which they were not prepared. I am giving here a bare summary.

"YOU OCCUPY a big place in England. Some of you will become prime ministers and generals in future and I am anxious to enter your hearts whilst your character is still being moulded and whilst it is easy yet to enter your hearts, I should place before you certain facts as opposed to the false history traditionally imparted to you. Among high officials I find ignorance, meaning not absence of knowledge but knowledge based on false data, and I want you to have true data before you as I think of you, not as Empire builders, but as members of a nation which will have ceased exploiting other nations and become the guardian of the peace of the world, not by force of arms but by its moral strength. Well then, I tell you that there is nothing like a Hindu case, at least so far as I am concerned, for in the matter of my country's freedom I am no more a Hindu than you are. There is a Hindu case put up by the Hindu Mahasabha representatives who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics, and am pleading with them that, representing as they do the great majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want, and the atmosphere would be as clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved amongst them all these years, I think they do not care for these pettyfogging things, they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of electoral seats and administrative posts. This bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities which are not India, but which are the

The Alien Wedge

blotting sheets of London and other Western cities which consciously or unconsciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance before the great question of Indian freedom of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented rebellious India—true ours is non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less. Freedom of India is superior to the disease which for the time is corroding some portions of the community, and if the constitutional question is satisfactorily solved the communal distemper will immediately vanish. The moment the alien wedge is removed the divided communities are bound to unite. There is, therefore, no Hindu case, and if there is one it must go by the board. If you study this question it will profit you nothing and when you go into its exasperating details you will, very likely, prefer to see us drowned in the Thames.

The Spiritual *Vs* The Animal

"I AM TELLING you God's truth when I say that the communal question does not matter and should not worry you at all. But, if you will study history, study the much bigger question—How did millions of people make up their minds to adopt non-violence and how they adhered to it? Study, not man in his animal nature, man following the law of the jungle, but study man in all his glory. Those engaged in communal squabbles are like specimens in a lunatic asylum. But study men laying down their lives, without hurting any one, in the cause of their country's freedom. Study man following the law of

his higher nature, the law of love so that when you grow to manhood you will have improved your heritage. It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over ours. No one chained a slave without chaining himself. And no nation kept another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation. It is a most sinful connection, a most unnatural connection that is existing at present between England and India and I want you to bless our mission because we are naturally entitled to our freedom which is our birthright and we are doubly entitled to it by virtue of the penance and suffering we have undergone. I want you, when you grow up, to make a unique contribution to the glory of your nation, by emancipating it from its sin of exploitation, and thus contribute to the progress of mankind."

The other question was what would happen to India with the rapacious princes when the Englishmen retire from India. Gandhiji assured the young men there was no danger from the princes but if they ran amok they were easier to deal with than Englishmen, that their very weakness would prevent them from doing any mischief, and that India's glory would lie, not in driving out the English, but in converting them from exploiters into friends, remaining there to protect India's honour in time of need.

I do not know what impression the visit made on the students but, I am sure, that the intellectual shock given by the visit cannot soon be forgotten. The living contact counts infinitely more than knowledge by hearsay and mists of misunderstanding often roll away in the clear sunshine of affectionate contact. To give an instance of quick conversion, Miraben's Indian dress and discipleship were too much of a shock to

some of the ladies there. They were not prepared to believe that she was an Englishwoman. There was bitter criticism when Miraben explained that she was not only the daughter of Admiral Slade but her great-uncle, Dr. Edmond Warre, was a distinguished Etonian and sometime Head Master of Eton. But Miraben was unruffled. She smilingly answered all questions with the result that after a couple of hours hearty chat her questioner and she were friends.

Britishers no Patrons of Learning in India

WHEN AT A VERY important meeting in London Gandhiji stated that literacy in India under British rule was less than in pre-British days some of the people were shocked at what they thought a monstrous exaggeration. But when one thinks of Eton five hundred years old, of three at least of the 21 Oxford Colleges dating as far back as 1261 A. D.—Balliol, Merton and University Colleges dispute the prize of being the most ancient and tries in vain to find out in India, boasting of a civilisation more ancient than most nations, any insitutions of anything like the age of Eton or Balliol, one may perhaps be able to gauge the significance of Gandhiji's assertion. There was a time before British rule when there were seats of learning in all ancient towns in India and day schools in every village, and when in Burma every monastery had a school. Where are those schools gone, one wonders. If they had been allowed to exist and nourished with care, we might have had our Etons and Balliols and Mertons. That is a feeling that an Indian cannot help having as he visits these ancient institutions, with a history almost as old as that of the country itself.

THE VISIT TO Oxford was an important event, as there was nothing but genuine affection and a sincere desire to understand and to get at the root of the Indian question. The Master of Balliol, Dr. Lindsay, who had, whilst in India, extended the invitation to Gandhiji to spend a quiet time under his roof, renewed the invitation, certainly with a view to give Gandhiji the benefit of a peaceful week-end, but more with putting him in touch with the intellectual forces in Oxford. Himself free from all trace of the pride of belonging to a ruling race (in fact he is a Scot) and accepting India's freedom as her birthright, he had no difficulty in getting friends interested in the Indian question. There were several meetings and conferences. At the Master's own house there was a meeting of about 40 select friends, and there were three conferences outside with the intellectuals. Mr. Thompson, the writer of the '*Other Side of the Medal*', and who in his '*Atonement*' has visualised England atoning for her sins to India, had invited friends like Dr. Gilbert Murray, Dr. Gilbert Slater, Prof. S Coupland and Dr. Datta to have a quiet long chat with Gandhiji. The foremost among the Oxford dons and fellows had also a similar conference which was followed by one with the members of the Raleigh Club, composed mostly of Dominion students, some of them Cecil Rhodes scholars and all keen students of the Empire problem. Last, but not least, there was a meeting organised by the Indian Students' Majlis where a number of English students also had been invited.

Amongst the Dons

The discussion at Mr. Thompson's house covered a large variety of subjects and touched some of the fundamental principles. Sir Gilbert Murray, who, it will be remembered, wrote very appreciatively of the

use of soul force as against brute force in the Hibert Journal some 13 years ago, seemed to be very much perturbed over what he thought were most dangerous manifestations of non-violent revolution and nationalism. "I find myself today in greater disagreement with you than even Mr. Winston Churchill," he said. "You want co-operation between nations for the salvaging of civilisation," said Gandhiji, "I want it too, but co-operation presupposes free nations worthy of co-operation. If I am to help in creating or restoring peace and good-will and resist disturbances thereof I must have ability to do so and I cannot do so unless my country has come to its own. At the present moment, the very movement for freedom in India is India's contribution to peace. For so long as India is a subject nation, not only she is a danger to peace, but also England which exploits India. Other nations may tolerate today England's imperialist policy and her exploitation of other nations, but they certainly do not appreciate it; and they would gladly help in the prevention of England becoming a greater and greater menace every day. Of course you will say that India free can become a menace herself. But let us assume that she will behave herself with her doctrine of non-violence, if she achieves her freedom through it, and for all her bitter experience of being a victim to exploitation.

India's Unique Opportunity

"THE OBJECTION about my talking in the terms of revolution is largely answered by what I have already said about nationalism. But my movement is conditioned by one great and disturbing factor. You might of course say that there can be no non-violent rebellion and there has been none

known to history. Well, it is my ambition to provide an instance, and it is my dream that my country may win its freedom through non-violence. And, I would like to repeat to the whole world times without number, that I will not purchase my country's freedom at the cost of non-violence. My marriage with non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position. I have not mentioned truth in this connection, simply because truth cannot be expressed excepting by non-violence. So, if you accept the conception my position is sound."

Sir Gilbert's objection, as the discussion showed, was more to some reported actual manifestations of non-violent methods than to the principle itself. Whilst he was talking of boycott he was thinking of the persecution of Col. Boycott in Ireland which had resulted in his clerk committing suicide. That led to a discussion which became almost boringly abstruse and academic. But Gandhiji's position at the end may be summed up in his words: "You may be justified in saying that I must go more warily, but if you attack the fundamentals you have to convince me. And I must tell you that the boycott may have nothing to do with nationalism even. It may be a question of pure reform, as without being intensely nationalistic, we can refuse to purchase your cloth and make our own. A reformer cannot always afford to wait. If he does not put into force his belief he is no reformer. Either he is too hasty or too afraid or too lazy. Who is to advise him or provide him with a barometer? You can only guide yourself with a disciplined conscience, and then run all risk with the protecting armour of truth and non-violence. A reformer could not do otherwise."

We went on to the subject of the Army, and India's capacity to govern herself, and so on and so forth. Would not India wait some time before she launched on the difficult task of self-government? If we send out our soldiers we have to be responsible for their lives, and so may it not be that the sooner you get an Indian Army the better? The Muslim community said last year in a united voice that they did not want responsibility at the centre. How are we to judge?

TO WHICH questions Gandhiji gave replies somewhat to this effect: "The long and short of it is that you will not trust us. Well, give us the liberty to make mistkes. If we cannot handle our affairs today, who is to say when we will be able to do so? I do not want you to determine the pace. Consciously or unconsciously you adopt the role of divinity. I ask you for a moment to come down from that pedestal. Trust us to ourselves, I cannot imagine anything worse happening than is happening today, a whole humanity lying prostrate at the feet of a small nation.

Freedom to Err.

"And what is this talk of being responsible for the lives of your soldiers? I issue a notice to all foreigners to enlist for military service in India, and if some Britishers will come, will you prevent them? If they will enlist, we should be responsible for their lives, as any other Government whom they serve would be. The key to self-government is without doubt the control of the Army.

"AS REGARDS A united demand, I must say, what I have now said several times, that you cannot have a united demand from a packed Conference. It is my case that the Congress represents the largest number of Indians. The British ministers know it. If they do not know it, I must go back to my country and have as overwhelming an opinion as possible. We had a life and death struggle. One of the noblest of Englishmen tried us and did not find us wanting. In consequence he opened the jail-gates and appealed to the Congress to go to the Round Table Conference. We had long talks and negotiations during which we exercised the greatest patience and there was a settlement under which the Congress agreed to be represented on the Round Table Conference. The settlement was respected by Government more in its breach than its observance, and after much hesitation I agreed to come, if only to keep my word of honour given to that Englishman. On coming here I find that I had miscalculated the forces arrayed against India and the Congress. But that does not dismay me. I must go and qualify myself and prove by suffering that the whole country wants what it asks for. Hunter has said that success on the battlefield was the shortest cut to power. Well, we worked for success on a different battlefield. I am trying to touch your heart instead of your body. If I do not succeed this time, I shall succeed next time."

Our Battlefield

The result of the discussion was that Gandhiji parted from the friends with much more common agreement than he had found when he came, and certainly, with much deeper mutual understanding.

Gandhiji's stout refusal to concede separate electorates to the untouchables was one of the pet

puzzles at all the gatherings and he was asked to explain his attitude. I reproduce the gist of what he has said at the Indian Students' Majlis, amplified by what he said about the same thing on other occasions:

Untouchable for ever?

'MUSLIMS AND SIKHS are all well organised. The untouchables are not. There is very little political consciousness among them and they are so horribly treated that I want to save them against themselves. If they had separate electorates their lives would be miserable in villages which are the strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy. It is the superior class of Hindus who have to do penance for having neglected the untouchables for ages. That penance can be done by active social reform and by making the lot of the untouchables more bearable by acts of service, but not by asking for separate electorates for them. By giving them separate electorates you will throw the apple of discord between the untouchables and the orthodox. You must understand I can tolerate the proposal for special representation of the Musalmans and the Sikhs only as a necessary evil. It would be a positive danger for the untouchables. I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the untouchable is a modern manufacture of a Satanic Government. The only thing needed is to put them on the voters' list, and provide for fundamental rights for them in the constitution. In case they are unjustly treated and their representative is deliberately excluded they would have the right to special Election Tribunal which would give them complete protection. It should be open to these tribunals to order the unseating of an elected candidate and the election of the excluded man.

"Separate electorates to the untouchables will ensure them bondage in perpetuity. The Musalmans will never cease to be Musalmans by having separate electorates. Do you want the untouchables to remain "untouchables" for ever? Well, the separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. What is needed is destruction of untouchability and when you have done it, the bar sinister which has been imposed by an insolent "superior" class upon an "inferior" class will be destroyed. When you have destroyed the bar sinister, to whom will you give the separate electorates? Look at the history of Europe. Have you got separate electorates for the working classes or women? With adult franchise, you give the untouchables complete security. Even the orthodox Hindus would have to approach them for votes.

"How then, you ask, does Dr. Ambedkar, their representative, insist on separate electorates for them? I have the highest regard for Dr. Ambedkar. He has every right to be bitter. That he does not break our heads is an act of self-restraint on his part. He is to-day so very much saturated with suspicion that he cannot see anything else. He sees in every Hindu a determined opponent of the untouchables, and it is quite natural. The same thing happened to me in my early days in South Africa, where I was hounded out by the Europeans wherever I went. It is quite natural for him to vent his wrath. But the separate electorates that he seeks will not give him social reform. He may himself mount to power and position but nothing good will accrue to the untouchables. I can say all this with authority having lived with the untouchables and having shared their joys and sorrows all these years."

IT WAS ESSENTIALLY a students' meeting and they asked all variety of questions. Some of them were characteristic of the Indian student in England.

Britain's Heritage

"Do you still believe in the good faith of England?" was one of the questions which elicited a reply that they will remember for all time.

"I believe in the good faith of England," said Gandhiji "to the extent that I believe in the good faith of human nature. I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal. And inasmuch as I know only of the poetry of love, you should not be surprised that I trust the English people. I have often been bitter and I have often said to myself 'When will this camouflage end? When will these people cease to exploit the poor people?' But instinctively I get the reply: 'That is the heritage that they have had from Rome.' I must conduct myself in accordance with the dictates of the law of love, hoping and expecting in the long run to affect the English nature."

What is your view about the industrialisation of India?

INDUSTRIALISM IS, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting

Industrialism

less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialisation. In fact, India when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it becomes industrialised—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrialising India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, *viz*, that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England. The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, and Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages, and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker, still for India?

What do you think of the I. C. S.?

The Civil Servant

THE I. C. S. is not really the Indian Civil Service, it is the E. C. S., the English Civil Service. I say this knowing that there are Indians in the Service. Whilst India is a subject nation they cannot but serve the interests of England. But supposing India secures

freedom and supposing able Englishmen are prepared to serve India, then they would be truly national servants. At the present time, under the name of I. C. S. they serve the exploiting Government. In a free India, Englishmen will come out to India either in a spirit of adventure, or from penance and willingly serve on a small salary and put up with the rigours of Indian climate instead of being a burden on poor India whilst they draw inordinately large salaries and try to live there in extra English extravagance and reproduce even the English climate. We would have them as honoured comrades, but if there is even a lurking desire to lord it over us and behave as superior race, they are not wanted.

Do you say that you are completely fit for independence?

India and the Empire

IF WE ARE NOT, we will try to be. But the question of fitness does not arise, for the simple reason that those who have robbed us of independence have to render it back. Supposing you repented of your conduct, you can express your repentance only by leaving us alone.

But why not Dominion Status? The fact is that the English understand what Dominion Status means. They don't know what is partnership, whereas Dominion Status means very nearly what you want. Why not accept it, if it is offered, as the Irish accepted the Free State status of their own accord. Does your partnership mean anything more than that?

Present the case to me, let me examine the contents and if I find that Dominion Status that you present is the same thing as independence, I shall

accept it at once. But I must throw the burden of proving it on those who say that Dominion Status is the same as independence.

* *

The talk with the members of the Raleigh Club was most absorbing, inasmuch as the members were all students from the Dominions, saturated with the Empire idea and keen students of politics. Every question was straight and to the point and I am tempted to transcribe a large part of the talk.

How far would you cut India off from the Empire?

From the Empire entirely; from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire is an Empire only because of India. That Emperorship must go and I should love to be equal partner with Britain sharing her joys and sorrows and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.

To what extent would India be prepared to share the sorrows of England?

To the fullest extent.

Do you think India would unite her fortunes inextricably with England?

Yes, so long as she remains a partner. But if she discovers that the partnership is like one between a giant and a dwarf, or if it is utilised for exploitation of the other races of the earth, she would dissolve it. The aim is the common good of all nations of the earth, and if it cannot be achieved I have patience enough to wait for ages rather than patch up an unreal partnership.

How would you distinguish exploitation from trading with a nation?

There are two tests: (1) The other nation must want our goods which should in no case be dumped on it against her will:

(2) the trade should not be backed by the navy. And whilst in this connection I may say that when you realise what wrong has been done by England to nations like us Indians, you will not sing *Britannia rules the waves* with any kind of pride. Things, in English Readers, which are matters for pride today will have to be matters for shame, and you will have to cease to take any pride over the defeat or humiliation of other nations.

How far is the British attitude towards the communal question an obstacle in your path?

Largely, or I should say half and half. There has been consciously or unconsciously that policy of divide and rule working here as in India. The British officials have sometimes coquetted with one party, sometimes with another. Of course, if I were a British official, I would probably do the same and take advantage of dissensions to consolidate the rule. Our share of responsibility lies in the fact that we fall easy victims to the game.

You think the British Government should suggest a solution of the communal question?

No. But I am the only party to say no. It is a humiliating thing and neither the Congress nor I can be pary to it. But I have suggested a judicial tribunal. There are some committals on the side of Government in Government of India and Provincial Government dispatches, though all Government solutions are tinged by political considerations. As for us, each party, though talking of justice, fights shy of arbitration, which shows that there is a good deal of expediency

and it is a question of degree who is wrong and who is right. The Judicial Tribunal can certainly be trusted to adjudicate between the various claims.

Could you tell us anything about the personnel?

They may be non-Hindu and non-Muslim judges of the Indian High Courts or judges from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Would their decision be accepted?

There can be question of accepting the decision of a Court. I may confess that there is a trick at the back of the suggestion. If Government will play the game and adopt my suggestion, the whole atmosphere will change and before the Judical Committee comes into being the communities will come out with a solution. For, there is sufficient material in the advances already made to satisfy the politically minded, and each one knows the flaws in his own claim.

* *

We returned from Oxford with the happiest of memories, the most vivid among them being of our hosts Dr. Lindsay and Mrs. Lindsay. It happened that Gandhiji, during one of these talks, had occasion to refer to General Dyer and the crawling lane. The audience was so sympathetic that the mere narration sent a thrill of horror among some of them. At the end of the meeting Mrs. Lindsay came to Gandhiji and sweetly said: "We will crawl on our bellies fifty times, Mr. Gandhi, if you think that will be sufficient expiation." "No," said Gandhiji, "you need not. I do not want anyone to do it. You or I would do it fifty times voluntarily. But let me try to force an English girl to crawl on her belly. She would give me a kick and she would be perfectly justified. I simply wanted

to give you an instance of frightfulness. The only expiation that is needed is for Englishmen to remain as servants, not as masters." As one, who has thought and written on the problems of democracy, the Master of Balliol is naturally cautious about the future of a free India and is most anxious to avoid a catastrophe, if at all possible. But should a catastrophe arise, and should it partake of the character of exclnsive self-suffering, as any campaign led by Gandhiji would be, I have no doubt that Dr. Lindsay's sympathies would be wholly on our side. As we were retiring to bed after a chat about the future he pulled out a book from his capacious bookshelf and read out to me the following magnificent passage about John Brown:

"Sometimes there comes a crack in Time itself,
Sometimes the earth is torn by something blind,
Sometimes an image that has stood so long
It seems implanted as the polar star
Is moved against an unfathomed force
That suddenly will not have it any more.
Call it the *mores*, call it God or Fate,
Call it Mansoul or economic law
That force exists and moves.
And when it moves
It will employ a hard and actual stone
To batter into bits an actual wall
And change the actual scheme of things.
John Brown
Was, such a stone—unreasoning as the stone
Destructive as the stone, and if you like,
Heroic and devoted as such a stone.
He had no gift for life, no gift to bring
Life but his body and a cutting wedge,
But he knew how to die."

Well if the Master of Balliol has room enough in his philosophy for John Brown, surely he has ample room for Gandhiji who has perfected John Brown's methods.

The Poona Surgeon

COL. MADDOCK, about whom Gandhiji inquired as soon as he came to England, found Gandhiji out one day, called on him and pressed him to visit his home near Reading. "My wife has some beautiful flowers and fruit and vegetables for you. You must pay us a visit," he said. Fortunately his place was very near Reading, which we had to pass through on our way from Eton to Oxford and Gandhiji agreed. It was a great joy both to the Maddocks and Gandhiji to meet after seven years, and Gandhiji gratefully said: 'But for your husband's skilful operation I should not have been here to greet you.' For me, it was a privilege to see Col. Maddock in the evening of his life, doing research work, as energetically as a youth of twenty and absorbed in a wonderful variety of interests. He is an expert gardener and has a beautiful garden with all kinds of flower and fruit trees on which he makes all sorts of experiments. He is equally interested in dairying and in his research into the causes of tuberculosis among cows he has made curious experiments on the grass that the cows eat. He has spent days on end on experimenting on the microbes that produce the finest butter, succeeded in doing so, but found that it was not an economic proposition. He produces his own gas, for household use, from petrol and is absolutely immersed in work. "Mr. Gandhi, you do not look at all older than when I saw you in Poona," Mrs. Maddock had said. Well I may say too that Col. Maddock did not look

older than he was in Poona. Perhaps he looked younger, as he was now free from the trammels of office and free to follow persuits after his own heart. How I wish all could make so rich a use of their time after retirement as Col. Maddock is making.

Spoon Fed British Public

IT WAS VERY good of Mr. Horrabin and Krishna Menon to have thought of having a reception in Gandhiji's honour under the Commonwealth of India League. Mr. Horrabin promised enthusiastic support of the League in India's demand for Swaraj and asked Gandhiji to tell them how most usefully they could give that support. Gandhiji's one message was: spread correct and accurate knowledge of India and let it replace the false history on which British Public was nurtured. The way in which the British press were deliberately pursuing a policy of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* he forcibly illustrated by the brutalities in Chittagong and Hijli and the attempts on the lives of Messrs Villiers and Durno. While the atrocious deeds in Chittagong and Hijli, which made the old and ailing poet to leave his seclusion and stirred him to righteous indignation, were only just mentioned in the British press, they were quite keen on showing that the detenus were a bad lot, that they are responsible for such attempts and deserve to be shot. "Now," said he, "both these attempts are deplorable and disgraceful and for me most embarrassing. I do not mind their being made much of it. But if you make much of them, why not also make much of the horrors perpetrated in Chittagong and Hijli? There is the inexorable law of cause and effect. There are these youths imprisoned on suspicion, without trial,

for an indefinite period. They are crushed and suppressed, some of their friends run amok, and indulge in acts of vengeance. No one is likely to condemn these deeds more than I for I hate violence on either sides but selfishly more on my side because it interrupts my work. That they are no Congressmen is true but that is no answer for me. They are Indians and it shows that the Congress is not able to control their activities and cannot prevent them from their mad career. But there is this other aspect of the case, which must not be missed. In a vast continent like India the surprise is that there are so few anarchical outrages, for, barbarities like those in Chittagong and Hijli would, in any other country, give rise to widespread open rebellion. I want the newspapers to go in for the whole truth. Instead there is a conspircy of silence and incorrect or incomplete accounts of incidents."

The appeal went home and Rev. Beldon moved a resolution urging the British presis to realise the necessity of publishing full and correct facts and warning it that suppression of facts is a grave wrong both to India and England. Rev. Beldon made a stirring speech in moving the resolution and assured Gandhiji that should Satyagraha be undertaken in India there would be a companion Satyagraha movement in England. The representatives of the reactionary press could not brook all this and protested that the resolution was a libel on the British press. One of them even went the length of asserting that Gandhiji would not give them news though their company had approached him with an offer to have a moving and talking picture of him! This friend delivered the others up into Gandhiji's hands and to the utter discomfiture of them all he said: "Well with the

friend who spoke last it is more a business proposition than anything else. To the others I make a sporting offer. Here am I to give them an accurate resume of all the happenings in Chittagong and Hijli. Would they publish it? Another sporting offer. Whilst I am here I get for them, without expecting any payment, news flashed here from India from day to day. Would they publish the news?" There was silence, the voices of protests were heard no more and the resolution passed with those two or three dissentients.

IV

On the Cam

WHEN WE WERE going to Eton one of the first questions that Gandhiji had asked was whether Eton was not the school where Jawaharlal was educated. 'It was at Harrow,' I said, 'and not Eton,' and I am not exaggerating, if I say, that part of Gandhiji's interest in the Eton visit was lost because of that knowledge. The reader will now understand why Gandhiji was looking forward to a visit to Cambridge. It is the Cambridge of Jawaharlal and Charlie Andrews, and when the latter took him out for his morning walk Gandhiji insisted on being taken through the vast quadrangle of Trinity College where Jawaharlal was educated. Call it sentiment, call it what you will, it is imbedded in human nature and Gandhiji is subject to it as much as any one of us. Trinity was the College, not only of Jawaharlal, but of Tennyson and Bacon and Newton, but perhaps, we should not have looked into it, did we not know it was Jawaharlal's College, just as, for instance, we did not look into

Christ Church, though we knew it was Wordsworth's. The same thing may be said about Pembroke which for us is more Charlie Andrew's College than of the poets Gray and Spenser. Ever since Oxford had its first College in A. D. 1261, the ambitions of Cambridge were aroused and in a few years of Balliol and Merton, Cambridge had its Peterhouse. The healthy rivalry has been maintained through all these centuries and both can boast of an equal number of worthies among their alumni, and if Cambridge has less colleges than Oxford it has more students, and if Oxford has its Thames with its beautiful banks, the Cambridge Colleges have their " backs " through which the Cam meanders, rendering these backyards the proudest beauty spots of Cambridge. All these Colleges had originally a religious Foundation which is still being maintained by each having its own Chapel. The Chapel of King's College (Cambridge) built by Henry VI in the fifteenth century is such a marvel of architecture that visitors to England make a point of seeing it. It is this Chapel that inspired those well known lines in Gray's elegy:

" Where through the long drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise"

Its windows, which tell stories of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in stained glass, are believed to "contain the finest series in the world of pictures in glass on a large scale," and the actual architects and masons were themselves Fellows of Colleges. No wonder, Wordsworth, who grew up in these surroundings and must have attended many a service in the Chapel, wrote one of his greatest sonnets on the Chapel, a sonnet, whose music is only rivalled by the music that the sonnet extols:

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned
(Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only) this immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence!
—Give all thou can'st: high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more:—
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

Our hearts sighed for Nalanda, Taksha Shila, Patalipurtra and Kashi, and Gandhiji, when he was asked a question as to the future of Indian education sorrowfully referred to the modern white elephants of Bangalore and Bombay.

If the Oxford professors were troubled over the justification of the Congress claim to represent India, the Cambridge ones were worried about India recklessly cutting herself adrift from England and the Empire. Why talk of independence and rub England up the wrong way? Has British rule in India done nothing but harm? Look at China with her national Government. Is not India under British rule ever so much better than China under self-rule? If British soldiers will not serve under a non-British Government, why not in the interests of peace accept a transition stage? Is the situation so desperate that if complete control cannot be achieved India should sacrifice a million lives? And so on and so forth. There were the elite of the University world gathered together under the roof of the Master of Pembroke to understand the

Indian case from Gandhiji and to see how and to what extent they could help. There were professors like Mr. Ellis Barker, whose studies of Ancient and Medieval polity are well known; savants like Mr. Lowes Dickinson, whose study of the Eastern question, pacific tendencies, we in India also, are familiar with; ripe theological scholars like Dr. John Murray and Dr. Baker. There was also Mr. Evelyn Wrench of the 'Spectator' eager to hit upon something which may be acceptable both to England and India and to avoid a clash between the two.

With all deference to their studies, and their breadth of outlook, and above all to their earnest desire to understand and help, I am afraid, no one, whether in Oxford or Cambridge, seems to appreciate the truth of Henry Campbell Bannerman's great maxim: "Good government is no substitute for self-government." They discuss the moralities of the problem and the equities and expediencies in all their aspect, but no one appreciates that that bedrock truth is the starting point of all these discussions. Having said this, I shall sum up what Gandhiji had to say on the various questions raised.

A Free India and Partnership

"THE PARTNERSHIP has to be on equal terms. It should not be 'subjection' in glorified language. That means that the present relationship must be completely transformed though the connection may be retained and that connection should be wholly and solely for the benefit of mankind. India by herself has no capacity to exploit the nations of the earth, but with Great Britain's assistance she can do it. Now the partnership must mean that exploitation shall cease, and, if Great Britain should not desist from it, India

should sever the connection. All that is wanted is a fundamental change in the British policy of exploitation. Britain cannot thereafter boast that she has a strong navy guarding the maritime highways and all her overseas commerce.

"What about the South African possessions? I would not insist on a transformation of Britain's relation with them, as a condition precedent to our partnership. But I should certainly strive to work for the deliverance of those South African races which, I can say from experience, are ground down under exploitation. Our deliverance must mean their deliverance. But, if that cannot come about, I should have no interest in a partnership with Britain, even if it were of benefit to India. Speaking for myself, I would say that the partnership, giving the promise of a world set free from exploitation, would be a proud privilege for my nation and I would maintain it for ever. But India cannot reconcile herself in any shape or form to any policy of exploitation and speaking for myself, I may say that if ever the Congress should adopt an imperial policy I should sever my connection with the Congress.

"But would not the Congress be satisfied with a status equal to South Africa or Canada, for the time being at any rate? I see the danger of saying 'Yes.' If you visualise a higher or superior status towards which we have then to work I should say 'no.' But if it is a status beyond which we have not to aspire I should say 'yes.' It would be a status which the ordinary man in the street should understand to be a radically different status from the present. I would, therefore, not accept a transition period during which we may have to be satisfied with a state lower than the best.

"But what about the Princes? They do not want independence? I know they don't, and they cannot as they are the mouth-piece of British Government. But there are others too who think that they cannot live except under the protection of British arms. For me, I cannot accept any thing short of a complete control of the army. If all other leaders of the land were to accept a compromise on the army question, I would say I would rather stay out, but would not resist it and make a call to the people to suffer. If there were such a large step taken which would ultimately and quickly lead to the final thing I would tolerate it, though I would not endorse it.

"But, if you say the British units will never serve under the National Government, it would mean to me a fatal objection to any connection with Great Britain. We do not want, we cannot possibly tolerate, an army of occupation. No scheme of Indianisation can serve any useful purpose inasmuch as until the last moment the command will be British, and the same doubts about our capacity to take over charge will be expressed as are expressed to-day. The real responsible Government can come when Britishers begin to trust India and her ability. Chaos can be got over only when Britain has a living conviction that it has done wrong to India and should now, by way of undoing the wrong, keep British troops at the disposal of Indian ministers. You are afraid that British soldiers may be cut to pieces under the foolish orders of Indian ministers. Well, I ask you not to forget that during the Boer War there came a time when British Generals were described in England as asses and British soldiers as heroes. If British Generals erred, Indian ministers too may err. The Indian ministers would certainly discuss everything with the Commander-in-Chief and

other military experts, but the final authority and responsibility will certainly have to be the ministers'. Let the Commander-in-Chief then resign or obey.

"The idea of my paying for freedom by blood startles you. Well, I who claim to know the conditions of India through and through know that India is dying by inches. The land revenue exactions mean morsels forcibly taken out of the mouths of the peasants' children. It is an indescribable agony through which the peasant is passing. In order to put that condition right a transition stage is not the remedy. Do the British Government understand transition as I mean? Would they keep the British soldiers to help us, *i. e.* only in our interests? If so, we would have them and pay them according to our means. But, if the position honestly held is that we are incapable, and the control should not be relaxed, then, if God wills it, we must go through the purgatory. I have not talked of rivers of other people's blood flowing, for I know that the party of violence is dying out. But I have talked of Ganges full of our own blood—a pure voluntary act of self-immolation to face the situation. It would be good for India to go through that purgatory if it must. Personally, I do not think there can be such communal riots as you fear. Ninety per cent of the population of India is rural and the strife is confined only to the ten per cent urban population. I would count that bloodshed as of no consequence beside this slow ignominious death which carries no glory with it. This of course assumes that India is being starved to death by having to pay the phenomenal expenditure for a foreign army of occupation and the most expensive civil service in the world. Even Japan, which is armed to the teeth, does not pay for her army to the extent that we have to do.

"My quarrel with you is this. I know that every honest Englishman wants to see India free, but is it not tragic for them to feel that the moment British arms are removed there would be invasions and internecine strife? Well, as against that, my contention is that it is the British presence that is the cause of internal chaos, because, you have ruled India according to the principle of divide and rule. Because of your benevolent intentions you feel that the harrow does not hurt the toad. In the nature of things, it cannot but hurt. It is not that you are in India in response to our invitation. You must realise that there is sullen discontent everywhere and everyone says 'we do not want foreign rule.' And why this over-anxiety about how we would fare without you. Go to the pre-British period. History does not record a larger number of Hindu-Muslim riots. In fact, the history of my own times shows a darker record. The fact is that the British arms are powerless to prevent riots, though they are powerful enough to punish the guilty and the innocent. We hear of no riots in the reign of even Aurungzeb. As for the invasions, the worst invasion left the villages untouched. They were a periodic visitation of the plague. If to avoid that kind of plague, which after all may be a cleansing process, we should have to maintain an army of doctors and starve ourselves to pay for them, we would far rather have the cleansing process. Take the occasional inroads of tigers and lions. Would we submit to the erection of castles and fortresses at the expense of millions of rupees rather than fight the beasts straight and take the risk? Pardon me, we are not such a nation of absolute cowards, who would always run away from risk. Better that we were wiped off the face of the earth than remain alive sustained by foreign

bayonets. No, you must trust us to know how to patch up our quarrels and to deal with invasions. India, which has survived many invasions, and showed a culture and a civilisation unsurpassed by any on earth, need not be pitied and kept in cotton wool."

I have simply condensed several hours' talk into these few paragraphs. Not that there were not many other questions discussed, but I have mentioned the main thing which was the subject of discussion. The friends were good enough to give a patient hearing and promised to carry on the discussion with a view to being able to suggest some solution, which could be presented to the British Ministers.

There was the utmost friendliness and sympathy as in Oxford, and the desire to understand and help uppermost in the mind of everyone. I am tempted to cite one instance. The question of India's readiness to be treated as a Dominion or 'a daughter nation' was being discussed. Some of the friends said that it should not be difficult for India to be satisfied with what is called Dominion Status. Mrs. Hutchinson said: "India's position cannot, in the nature of things, be like Canada or South Africa. Have we ever treated her as 'a daughter' nation? The Dominions are natural links, they have grown out of the mother country. How can India be described as such, a colony or a link?" And Gandhiji gratefully said; "Mrs. Hutchinson, you have hit the mark."

At the Indian Majlis, I must confess that the most intelligent questions were asked by the English boys rather than the Indian boys. The ignorant questions were common to both. The Minorities' question came up, and evoked from Gandhiji the following striking explanation: "Don't think that

paralysis has possessed the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh masses in India. Had it been the case I should not have been here to represent the biggest organisation in India. But the stupidity is confined to the present company." The boys roared with laughter, as Gandhiji capped the last remark with the explanation: "Present company meaning not this house, but the Indian delegates in the Round Table Conference, including of course myself." An ignorant question from the English boys, *viz.*, 'why does not the unemployed rural population go to the towns and join some industry?' elicited a witty reply: "Even the Royal Commission on Agriculture did not suggest this remedy."

But amidst this roaring laughter the real message was not lost, as Gandhiji described to them in detail the "scientific scorching of a whole race under the British rule." Indeed, an English friend at the meeting, who was about to join the army and expecting to leave for India a fortnight hence, asked: 'Could you please tell us how an Englishman going to India can cooperate with Indians and serve India?' To whom Gandhiji said: 'Well, the first thing he should do is to see Charlie Andrews and ask him what he did and what he has gone through to serve India. He has dedicated every minute of his life to the service of India, and done the work of several thousand Englishmen. Let the Englishman, therefore, have his first lessons from him. Then he must know, not with a view to teach, but to learn how to serve India, and if he approaches his task in that spirit he will certainly teach. But in doing so he will efface himself and merge himself with the Indians, as for instance, Mr. Stokes has done in Simla Hills. Let them all identify themselves, and try to help them. What can

not real love do? Let all those who are fired with love for India certainly go to India. They are needed there."

THE "FRIENDS" or the Quakers, who were the first to extend to Gandhiji the nation's welcome in their own 'house,' have been trying to help as best as they can. Once they mooted the question of sending a deputation to India and discussed every detail of personnel and terms of reference and *modus operandi*.

The Minorities

They met Gandhiji with a series of absorbing questions on the Indian situation. I shall not cover all the questions and answers. But, I cannot resist the temptation of recording the burning language in which Gandhiji exposed the hypocrisy and camouflage of placing the Minorities' question as an obstacle to the solution of the constitutional question: "I have described the Conference as packed and that deliberately. I could, if you want, demonstrate to you how wicked some of the things have been, how much wire-pulling has taken place before this packed Conference came into being. Supposing, we had been asked to elect representatives of the Mahasabha, or the Musalmans, or the untouchables, we should easily have had Congress representatives. Would Congress ever have allowed the rights of the Indian States' subject to be sold away? It is an untenable claim for the Princes to make that they represent their subjects also. It was a most fatal flaw in the Conference that the Princes should have been invited to come in a double capacity. There is a States' Peoples' Conference in India and it could raise a terrific row over this question, but I persuaded them to stay their hands.

"I have told you what is agitating my mind. You may take the Congress to be incapable of bartering away the Minorites' rights. The untouchables I know as one can claim to know. It would be equal to killing them if separate electorates were given them. They are at present in the hands of superior classes. They can suppress them completely and wreak vengeance on the untouchables who are at their mercy and it is because I want to prevent that thing happening that I would fight the demand for separate electorates for them. Whilst I am saying this, I know, I am opening out my shame to you. But in the existing state of things how could I invite destruction for them? I would not be guilty of that crime. Dr. Ambedkar, as able as he is, has unhappily lost his head over this question. I repudiate his claim to represent them.

"Take now the other end—the Europeans. I should stoutly resist separate representation for them on other grounds. They are the ruling race and they are exercising an influence which is, perhaps, unique in the country. You know how they were able to make the life of the first Indian Governor hell for him? His very secretariat shadowed him and his very servants were as his spies. I said to Sir Huberr Carr representing the European community on the Round Table Conference, 'why not come to us for votes? You may be sure that a man like Mr. Andrews would always be returned by an Indian electorate.' He said Mr. Andrews would not be a fit representative of Englishmen. He no more represents the English mind than an Indian does. Well, I say that if the Englishman must stay in India, he must represent the Indian mind. What did Dadabhai Naoroji, Lord Salisbury's black man, do? He went to Parliament on the vote of Central Finsbury. As for

the Anglo-Indians, I know, perhaps, the poor among them much better than Col. Gidney does. I know their condition through and through. They have wept before me. They have said, we try to ape the Englishman, but he will not adopt us. And we have cut ourselves away from Indians by taking to strange manners and customs. I say to them, come back to us and we will adopt you. Well, if they went in for separate electorates they would become untouchables. Col. Gidney's position may be quite safe, but all will not be knighted like him. But they will all be safe if they approach our people by the right of service and claim their vote."

V

At Lancashire

IN SOME OF the manufacturing areas of Lancashire the manufacturers have concentrated on cotton fabrics exclusively for export to India. "We were prepared for courtesy, which we expect from all gentlemen, we were even prepared for a little bitterness which distress and misunderstanding often creates; but we found instead a warmth of affection for which we were not prepared. I shall treasure the memory of these days to the end of my earthly existence." In these words Gandhiji summed up his gratefulness for having been given the opportunity of meeting the Lancashire employers and working people. The warmth of reception could only be equalled by what Gandhiji has been familiar with in the towns and villages of India. There were no public meetings, but what was better was a heart to to heart chat with various groups of employers and employed who placed before Gandhiji all the facts in

their possession, and even at the risk of having to repeat the same reply in substance, Gandhiji met all groups and declined to interview none.

The Cause of the Distress

AFTER HAVING given all of them a patient hearing, it was no happiness to Gandhiji to tell them that he could bring them very little comfort. They had come with great expectations perhaps, but Gandhiji had, with great sorrow, to make it clear to them that he was called to undertake a task to which he and his country were unequal. "My nationalism is not so narrow that I should not feel for your distress or gloat over it. I do not want my country's happiness at the sacrifice of any other country's happiness. But whilst I see that you are hard hit, I am afraid, your distress is not largely due to India. Conditions have been bad for some years and the boycott came only as the last straw." He said at Springvale Garden Village: "There is not boycott of British cloth, as distinguished from other foreign cloth, since the 5th March when the truce was signed. As a nation we are pledged, to boycott all foreign cloth, but in case of an honourable settlement between England and India, *i. e.*, in case of a permanent peace, I should not hesitate to give preference to Lancashire cloth to all other foreign cloth, to the extent that we may need to supplement our cloth and on agreed terms. But how much relief that can give you, I do not know. You must recognise that all the markets of the world are now not open to you. What you have done, all other nations are doing today. Even Indian mills would be producing more and more cloth every day. You, surely, will not want me to restrict Indian enterprise for the sake of Lancashire."

"I am pained," he said, "at the unemployment here. But here is no starvation or semi-starvation. In India we have both. If you went to the villages of India you would find utter despair in the eyes of the villagers, you would find half-starved skeletons, living corpses. If India could revive them by putting life and food into them in the shape of work India would help the world. Today India is a curse. There is a party in my country which would sooner see an end to the lives of these half-starved millions in order that the rest may live. I thought of a humane method and that was to give them work with which they were familiar, which they could do in their cottages, which required no great investment in implements and of which the product could be easily sold. This is a task which is worthy of the attention even of Lancashire."

"But look at these mills which were busy hives only the other day lying absolutely idle. In Blackburn, Darwen, Great Harwood and Accrington over a hundred mills have had to close down. In the Great Harwood area nothing less than 17,436 looms are idle.

"We took special training at Colleges in weaving Indian textiles, we are weaving exclusively *dhoties* for India, and why should we not make them today and bring about better relations between India and England?" said some of the employers.

"We helped India during the famine of 1897–99. We collected money for the poor and sent it to them. We have always stood for a liberal policy. Why should the boycott be directed against us?" said some of the working people. Some of them placed their individual grievances before Gandhiji. The most pathetic of them all was the following:

"I am a cotton operative. I have been a weaver for 40 years and now I am without work. It is not want or distress that worries me. My estimate of myself is gone. I have fallen in my own estimate inasmuch as I am a recipient of unemployment dole. I do not think I am going to finish my life with any self-respect."

The Unvarnished Truth

At HAYES FARM, which is a rest house in Yorkshire for the employers, and the prosperous among the employees who might care to spend a weekend there, several deputations of unemployed people waited upon Gandhiji with very nearly the same tale and the brethren in the rest house had a special service where they prayed for the will of God to prevail. It was impossible for Gandhiji to disguise his feelings. "I would be untrue to you, I would be a false friend if I were not frank with you," said Gandhiji and poured out his heart before them for three quarters of an hour—describing how economics and ethics and politics were in his life inextricably mixed up, how he had raised the banner of truth above everything else, how he had refrained from wedding himself to the results, how he was led to place the spinning wheel before the country and how the world conditions had driven them to the present state of things. "I strove with Lord Irwin last March for the liberty to boycott liquor and foreign cloth. He suggested that I might give up this boycott for three months as a gesture and then resume it. I said I could not give it up for three minutes. You have three million unemployed, but we have nearly three hundred million unemployed and underemployed for half the year. Your average

unemployment dole is 70 shillings. Our average income is seven shillings and six pence a month. That operative was right in saying that he was falling in his own estimation. I do believe it is a debasing thing for a human being to remain idle and to live on doles. Whilst conducting a strike I would not brook the strikers remaining idle for a single day and got them to break stones or carry sand and work in public streets asking my own co-workers to join them in that work. Imagine, therefore, what a calamity it must be to have 300 million unemployed several millions becoming degraded everyday for want of employment, devoid of self-respect, devoid of faith in God. I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them. It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day. To them God can only appear as bread and butter. Well, the peasants of India were getting their bread from their soil. I offered them the spinning wheel in order that they may get butter, and if I appear to-day before the British public in my loin-cloth it is because I have come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked, dumb millions. We have prayed that we may bask in the presence of God's sunshine. I tell you it is impossible to do so whilst millions are knocking at your door. Even in your misery you are comparatively happy. I do not grudge that happiness. I wish well to you, but do not think

of prospering on the tombs of the poor millions of India. I do not want for India an isolated life at all, but I do not want to depend on any country for my ood and clothing. Whilst we may devise means for tiding over the present crisis, I must tell you that you should cherish no hope of reviving the old Lancashire trade. It is impossible. I cannot religiously help in the process. Supposing, I have suddenly stopped breathing, and am helped by artificial respiration for a while and begin to breathe again, must I, for ever, depend on aritificial respiration and refuse to use my own lungs again? No it would be suicidal. I must try to strengthen my own lungs and live on my own resources. You must pray to God that India may strengthen her lungs. Do not attribute your misery to India. Think of the world forces that are powerfully working against you. See things in the dry light of reason.'

And later Gandhiji said:

"Pray tell me what I am to do with a fifth of the human race living on the verge of starvation and devoid of all sense of self-respect. It should occupy the attention even of unemployed Lancashire. You have told us of the help Lancashire gave us during the famine of 1899-1900. What return can we render but the blessings of the poor? I have come to give you fair trade. But, if I go without giving it, it will not be through any fault of mine. There is—no bitterness in me. I claim fellowship with the lowest of animals. Why not then with Englishmen with whom we have been bound, for good or ill, for over a century and amongst whom I claim some of my dearest friends? You will find me an easy proposition, but if you will repel my advances I shall go away, not in bitterness, but with a sense that

I was not pure enough to find a lodgement in your hearts."

THE TALK WITH the employers at Edgeworth was most friendly and carried on in a most dispassionate spirit. It is there that Gandhiji forcibly brought out the economic nature of the foreign cloth boycott.

Foreign Cloth Boycott

Is it possible to divorce boycott for a political purpose from boycott for an economic purpose?

When the sole object was that of punishing Britain, as in 1930, when people preferred articles of American or German make to those of British make—it was avowedly of a political purpose. Even British machinery was then boycotted. But now the original economic boycott remains. You may call it boycott but it is an entirely educative effort at a self-purificatory endeavour. It is an appeal to go back to our former calling, shake off idleness and earn a living, however poor, not on doles but by the sweat of their brow.

But the political aspect would be there in asmuch as you would give preference to your mills over all other foreign articles.

The boycott was not undertaken on behalf of the mills. In fact, it was the first constructive effort begun with our quarrel with the local mill-owners, and though the millionaires are supporting our movement, they are not controlling our policy but we are trying to influence them. And when we go out to the villages we do not ask them to wear Indian mill cloth, we ask them to wear Khadi or to make their own Khadi, and every Congressman is expected to wear Khadi.

Whatever you may say, you are in for more political power, which you are bound to get, and as soon as you get it, these millowners, in the unscrupulousness of their greed, will build huge tariff walls and be a graver danger to your villages than even the Lancashire cotton trade.

If I am still living then, and if such a catastrophe happens, I make bold to say that the mills will be destroyed in the process. And, with real political power, universal adult suffrage will come and it will be impossible for the monied classes to crush the interests of poor villagers.

Don't you think people themselves will go back to mill cloth as the Americans are going back to liquor?

No. In America, Prohibition was a mighty weapon used by a powerful nation against an unwilling people. People were accustomed to drinking. Drink was fashionable. In India, mill cloth was never a fashion, whereas Khadi has become a fashion and a passport to respectable society. And, whatever happens I shall fight on for the economic salvation of my people and that, you will agree, is worth living for and dying for.

It will be an unequal fight. The rapacity of economic competition will carry everything before it.

God, you say, has suffered defeat at the hand of Mammon and will continue to do. Well, He will not suffer defeat in India.

Mr. Grey, the Chairman of the Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers' Association, who carried on a large part of this interesting conversation, agreed that the distress was more felt because they were thinking of a most concentrated area. Whereas he said in this area of Blackburn, 50 per cent of unemployment was due to India in his own area Burnely, only 15 per

cent was due to India. He also agreed that many of the mills had been closed down before the boycott of British goods was declared by the Congress and that a large part of the distress was due to world conditions and he also agreed that even a complete lifting of the boycott was not going to relieve the distress considerably.

Poverty in England and India

THE UNEMPLOYED working men, who saw Gandhiji were in no bitter mood. On the contrary, they asked questions about the agricultural conditions in India, why the agriculturist had no work for six months in the year, why the standard of living was so poor and so on and so forth. The question with them as they frankly put it, was not of starvation but lowered standard of living; where they could spend a shilling they have to be satisfied with six pence, and whilst many of them can save nothing at all, many had to live on their savings. The rate of their present dole is 17/- male, 15/- female (9/- for wife if not a worker) and 2/- for each child per week. "This" said Gandhiji, "is a fortune, and for you, a resourceful race, it should not be difficult to hit upon other industries and occupations. For my starving crores, I have no other occupation. If some of you experts can find it, I am prepared to substitute it for the spinning wheel. In the meanwhile, I can hold out to you no more hope than this, that an independent India, as an equal partner of Great Britain, will give preference to Lancashire cloth, which India needs and which Lancashire alone can produce, over all foreign cloth."

Poor comfort this, but as they left I found no bitterness in them. One of them said: 'Something od cannot but come out of this. And, if nothing

good, no evil can come out, and good-will certainly is the immediate result. We understand each other now. It is a privilege to have seen Mr. Gandhi, a mighty force thrown up by awakening East.' Another said: 'I am one of the unemployed, but if I was in India I would say the same thing that Mr. Gandhi is saying.'

VI

The Dean of Canterbury

"THE PRESSMEN are wondering," said the Dean in his charming, easy manner, "why Mr. Gandhi should have come to Canterbury. Is it surprising for me to invite him or for him to visit me, they seem to wonder. Well, I told them that, quite apart from politics, there is one great interest in common between Mr. Gandhi and me and that is religion. It is just to have a talk about things spiritual that I was looking forward to a meeting with Mr. Gandhi and I am quite sure that we must meet again."

They had an intimate talk and then Gandhiji had to impose silence on himself at three o'clock, so as to be able to talk next day at the same hour when he had to assist in the deliberations of an important Committee. "With you as witness Mr. Dean, I am going into silence" said Gandhiji. "And woe betide the man who makes you speak," said the Dean, who had just asked him if he would like to attend the afternoon service. "I would love it" Gandhiji had already replied.

So we attended an impressive service in the ancient Canterbury Cathedral. The Dean at the end of the service, offered special prayer for the Indian delegates at the Round Table Conference asking of

God to give India the ordered liberty that England was enjoying and also a second prayer to the Almighty to relieve the suffering of the stricken millions in China. These were no conventional or pious prayers, as I was soon to see.

"THE BOOKS ON your table in the drawing room." said I, "show that you are interesting yourself in China."

China

The little inquiry was enough to draw the Dean out. "Oh yes. I have been a student of China, but the calamity that has befallen China makes a study of it imperative and we are planning a visit next spring. Dr. Schweitzer, I hope, will be there, Dr. Grenfell, I hope will be there, Charlie Andrews and I. The area submerged equals the area of the British Isles, nothing less than 80 millions of people are affected and something like one million have perished. We should study the situation on the spot and rivet the attention of the whole world, if possible, on it," said the Dean with much emotion.

"You will study the political aspect too?" I asked. "Yes," said the Dean. "Liberty, to me, does not mean *my* liberty. It means the liberty of all and everyone."

"You could not have hit on a better personnel for the inquiry," said I, and immediately the Dean proceeded to pay a tribute to Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Schweitzer. "Dr. Grenfell's is a name known to all in England. He went to far off Labrador to work for the oppressed there and for Albert Schweitzer it would be a continuation of the work he has been doing in the heart of Africa."

"He has just sent a copy of his latest book to Gandhiji," said I, and the Dean said he knew the book. "Dr. Schweitzer gave a new turn to the central

current of theological thought in Europe," said the Dean, "and though he would seem to have gone to the other extreme, I think his was a timely warning. He is a remarkable personality. He made a deep study of music, especially of Bach, of whose music he was a skilled executant, then studied surgery and took his Doctor's degree and finally decided to go off to farthest Africa to serve the oppressed humanity there. His guiding motives were two: (1) His implicit faith in the word of the Lord that he who loseth his life shall find it; (2) That he must do something to expiate the sins of our people—the tyrannies and brutalities we had perpetrated on them by the nefarious slave traffic, and our having demoralised them by liquor. No expiation could be enough he thought, and so threw himself right in the midst of disease and danger and death."

Russia

I MENTIONED Bertrand Russell's book on China lyin g on his table and the Dean started off saying something about Bertrand Russell which compelled him to say something about himself. "Oh yes, I have known Bertrand Russell well. At the time of the Russian Revolution, I had him to speak on Russia and incurred the suspicion of the then military authorities in Manchester: soldiers attended our meeting. I felt that what the Russians were doing was the right thing. They were said to have denounced religion and Christianity. I did not mind it, for I saw quite clearly that what they did was more important than what they said. And nothing could have been more in the spirit of Christ than their fight for the poor and the oppressed and to assure that the amenities of life must be given from the bottom upwards. It is not he

that sayeth 'Lord, Lord' that is the true Christian, but he that doeth the will of the Lord."

"You will be agreeably surprised, Dean," said I, "to find that the same view has been expressed by Noel and Dorothy Buxton in almost identical language in the book called *The Challenge of Bolshevism.*" He was delighted. He had not seen the book which I promised to send him. "If only we knew the men we have fought!" said the Dean with a sigh, and mentioned the Germans. "I saw them and knew them" said the Dean, and felt that we could not fight them." I mentioned Lord Haldane, and the Dean said, "He was one of the very few who knew Germany and the Germans. He was Scotch, was not able to enter I believe on grounds of health the University here, he went to Germany and imbibed all that was best in the German culture."

But as he was talking about these and kindred topics, his mind was with all the oppressed humanity in different parts of the world and said: "As we were reading the 23nd Psalm during the afternoon service I felt that Mr. Gandhi must have often been in the situation graphically described there and must have always felt strong in the strength of God."

But as for me, I am a worm and a man, a very scorn of men, and the outcaste of the people.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out their lips and shake their head saying he trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him if he will have him.

And then: *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:* For *Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.*

And the Dean repeated these last verses. "Many have asked me whether I was going to convert

Mr. Gandhi to Christianity," added the Dean. "To convert him!" I have said to them indignantly: 'His is one of the most Christ-like lives that I have yet come across."

"Some one has said," I reminded the Dean, "that the Church repels, but religion attracts, and these friends miss the true spirit of religion."

"THAT IS VERY striking. I wonder who has said it," said the Dean. But he took care to add a pendant.

The Churchman

"And yet all movements for growth and reform must come from and can come from those in the Church. The Church, to me, is like the bark of a tree. The function of the bark is to protect; its tendency is to construct; in the interests of Life the bark needs each year to be cracked that the life may expand, and yet the bark remains as the protection of the tree. I could not have been the rebel that I am but for my being in the Church." And a rebel he is as I have already shown. He traces his descent from the French Huguenots who came hundreds of years ago to England and introduced silk-weaving. "And so I am both a weaver and a rebel," says the Dean proudly. "Two things in common with the Mahatma."

BUT HE RETURNED to the theme and said if he could think of a parallel of the Mahatma it was St. Francis

The Twain shall be one

of Assisi, and the mention of Assisi brought back to him the memory of his dear wife with whom he had spent some time before her death in Assisi and in Florence, the place of Savonarola. And as he spoke of his dear wife in words of matchless

adoration I felt as though I had been privileged to sit near a man who had realised that Death is but a deeper life. 'Death has not separated us,' he said, 'she is closer to me. I feel her radiating presence every moment of my life and I shall daily live with her in the work that I have now taken upon myself.' And as I listened to the Dean vividly recalling the deathless picture of his wife's life-work among the 20,000 mothers of Manchester, the quiet and resolute fortitude with which she bore the fell disease of cancer, and her death, I repeated the words of the great hymn:

"O Death, where is thy sting? Where grave, thy victory?"

And he recalled, too, the days of his youth when he had set his heart on going out to India as a missionary, how he studied philosophy and then theology, and how his views were regarded as too advanced to qualify him to go out with a misson to India? "Often have I felt like giving up everything and going down to the East to live and dedicate my life to the service of the oppressed. My dear wife lived every moment of her life with them," said the Dean. "But trusted and influential advisers thought otherwise. They said that my presence was necessary in Canterbury which was the very centre of English-speaking Christianity, where I could have men from far and near and establish contact with them and, if possible, help in the solution of the problems that were claiming the attention of the world." "Such a visit," he added, "was the present one and he was sure that if Gandhiji enjoyed the peace here, he must come once, again." "The press people are asking me if Mr. Gandhi visited the Cathedral and what he did there. Well, I said to them, he accompanied me, took

part in the worship and stood there in the attitude and went through the gestures appropriate to worship. But I told them that they might say that the picture I shall always treasure is of Mr. Gandhi standing, a book in hand, in front of my drawing-room fire and feeling quite at home. I wish a painter could paint it."

No Amritsar again

"I DO NOT KNOW" he added, "whether the press people will report all that I have said. I do not mind so long as they do not put in my mouth things I have not said. In the North, Pressmen were quite good to me. I do not know how they will treat me here. But I thought I must use the occasion by declaring to the British public through them, that in case the Round Table Conference fails, I, at any rate, will not tolerate a rule of the strong hand—the British public will not tolerate a repetition of Amritsar."

The Dean showed Gandhiji over the Christ Church Cathedral, going into the history of every part of that ancient architecture, he laid the very greatest emphasis on incidents that revealed the true spirit of the sovereign virtues of Liberty and toleration. "Thomas a Becket really died for liberty. He rebelled against the authority of kings. That is why his name is revered throughout Europe. Down there, right under the nave, is an old church where the French Presbyterians, who fled from persecution in France, were allowed to come and worship in peace. There is the tomb of Hubert Walter who joined the Crusades and found the Sultan a very amiable man. You see the head of the Sultan on the tomb, and whilst three or four other heads on the tomb are defaced or obliterated, I am glad this remains."

AT NIGHT HE squatted on the floor watching Gandhiji spinning his wheel. "They say," said he "Mr. Gandhi, hates machinery. Well this is the most delicate piece of machinery I have seen, and I should love to cover myself with the cloth that is made out of this thread." He had already told the Press reporters that "Mr. Gandhi's attitude to machinery had been much misunderstood. Machinery ought not to enslave man — that is one thing and machinery ought not to put man out of employment and impoverish him. It is because it has impoverished masses of men in India that Mr. Gandhi asks them to go back to the wheel."

Man is not made for Machinery

As he sat talking his heart once again went to the oppressed Chinese. "I think, Mahatmaji, we shall have your blessing when we go to China." The spirit of service is revealed in all that the Dean says and does and perhaps the source of inspiration is to be found as much in the years of beautiful companionship that he had with his noble wife as in his own devotion to the Lord. It is in her spirit that he seems to live, to move and have his being. The least little detail puts him in mind of his wife. As he made tea for us in the early morning he said: "I do not know the kitchen very well. I know the one in Manchester very well indeed, as I cooked, sometimes five times or even seven times at night, whilst my wife was ailing."

The Dean has a keen sense of humour and has often made us laugh at his expense and that of the many old Deans whose portraits hung on the panels of the Deanery. But the picture of the Dean I shall always treasure is of the kindly spirit, thinking ever of oppressed humanity and thus living in the eternal companionship of his wife.

VII

Bow Bells

THE CHILD WHO has given Gandhiji the pet name of 'Uncle Gandhi' is a boy of three in the children's House attached to Kingsley Hall. Ever since the children saw Gandhiji, he has been in their days and their dreams. Now, tell me, mummy, what does Gandhi eat, and why does not he wear shoes?' and so on and so forth. One day the mother said: "No, look here, you mustn't say 'Gandhi,' but 'Mr. Gandhi. You know Mr. Gandhi is a very good man." I am sorry, mummy," says the little tot making amends, I will call him 'Uncle Gandhi.' God has similarly met with the same fate and He is called 'Uncle God,' but that story I shall omit, for it is no part of my story. So the name caught on, and on his birthday the little children sent to 'dear Uncle Gandhi' birthday presents in the shape of a toy dog and sweets, and wished "you had a birthday cake with icing and a bird on it. Please will you come here on your birthday and we will have band and play music about 'daisy' and 'away in a manger' and light candles."

Theory and Practice

BUT THERE IS one who does not belong to the Children's House but is growing up under her parents' care. She is just four and this is how she tries to keep the memory of an evening with Gandhiji green. "I have a bone to pick with you," said her father to Gandhiji on the birthday. "And what is it?" asked Gandhiji laughing. "Well my little Jane comes every morning to me, hits me and wakes me up and

says, "now don't you hit back, for Gandhi told us the other day never to hit back!" There are others who, their parents lovingly complain, have become little handfuls inasmuch as they insist on being awakened early morning to say 'good morning' to Gandhiji when he goes out for a walk, and the parents, who have been no early risers, are hard put to it to wake up early and wake the little ones early. Perhaps, these little ones will grow up into sturdy rebels in future and prove a handful to the parents, if the latter refuse to grow with them. That I am building no castles in the air, but on the solid rock of fact, will be apparent from what the little children have imbibed.

Here, for instance, is an essay written on the birthday by a small girl (I forget her age, but I know she is less than ten):

"St. Francis of Assisi was called the little poor man of Assisi. He was just like Gandhi in every way.

"They both loved nature, such as the children, birds and flowers. Gandhi wears loin-clothes like St. Francis did, when he was on earth.

"Gandhi and St. Francis were sons of rich merchants. One night while St. Francis was feasting with his followers, he thought of the poor Italians. He ran out and gave up this rich clothes and his money to the poor and dressed himself in old sacks, just like Gandhi.

"St. Francis of Assisi took some of his followers. They made huts of trees. Gandhi did the very same thing. He gave up all his rich gay life to the poor Indian people.

"Gandhi's people gave him his loin clothes to come to London. As he told us children who go to Kingsley Hall that he was not rich enough to buy them.

"On Monday he has a day's silent for that is their religion. Gandhi for his brithday present had wooden toys, candles and sweets. He lives on goat's milk, nuts and also fruit."

Here is another by a boy of ten, reproduced as it is, without a change of spelling or grammar like the foregoing.

"Mr. Gandhi is a Indian who was educated as a law student in London in 1890. He gave up this to help his country get better conditions.

"He has come to England for the Indian Round Table Conference to try and get back the trade for India. He has been trying to get the 'Brahmins' to let the 'Untouchables' come into their temples. They are about 6,000,000 people who do not know what a good meal is. He has given up all his belongings and is trying to be one of the poorest Indians. That is why he wears loin-cloth.

"His food is goat's milk, fruit, and vegetables. He does not eat meat or fish because he does not belived taken life. Gandhi is a Christian Indian.

"Mr. Gandhi spins his own cotton. He does an hour's spinning every day in England and even when he was in hospital. He has just come back from Lancashire visiting the cotton mills.

"He prays from Sunday 7 p. m. till Monday 7 p. m. and if you speak to him he does not answer you. When he came visiting, he came to my house and my mother was ironing, but he said "Don't stop for I have had to do that myself." I have shaken hands with him. The Indian word for "Hullo" or 'Good-bye' is '*Nomaskar.*'

W. A. I. Saville, 21 Eagling Road, Bow, London, E. 3. 30-9-31."

How real and true and priceless, before the worthless piffle that some of the journalists spin out and make thrilling 'story' out of!

I must say that this is the result of what their teachers have taught them, and what they have learnt from a contact with Gandhiji.

Niggers and Our Flag

IN CONTRAST WITH this, here is a picture of a school in the country, about 40 miles from London, I visited in company with Mr. Brailsford. "Now tell me," I asked them, "the name of the country I come from." There was a few moments' silence but at last the five year old daughter of the teacher said, "From a nigger country." Her neighbour slightly older was shocked and whispered into her ears: "He is not dark. He is an Indian." In another class Mr. Brailsford asked where India was on the map. They showed India quite all right, but the teacher immediately added to their knowledge: "It is a country under our flag, and this gentleman has come to demand rights for his people." Poor things, they had not heard of "Gandhi," but I discovered later on that the boy who whispered into the ears of the girl and corrected her was the son of a working woman who reads newspapers and has a great regard for Gandhiji.

The picures of the Children's House I have given are a tribute to those in charge of the House, as also a specimen of the coming generation. Thousands upon thousands of children in England will have seen Gandhiji before he leaves the English shores. And who knows, it may be this generarion with whom we may have to settle accounts after all! They will be much better and more fair-minded parties to deal with,

than the present parties fed on the dailies that can say nothing good of India and do say much that is bad and untrue.

VIII

Mr. BRAILSFORD: When you abolish the salt tax, what substitute will you propose to fill the hole in the revenue.

H. N. Brailsford

Gandhiji: Salt is a small matter, what really matters is the excise on toddy and opium, that is really a big proportion of the revenue, there is no way of filling that gap, unless we can cut down the cost of the army, that is the octopus that is strangling us. This terrible drain must come to an end.

Br. That, I imagine, will be the chief issue at the Round Table Conference.

G. Indeed it will; we can't shirk it.

The Artist: Do you intend then to clear out the white garrison?

G. Certainly, I intend to clear it out.

The Artist: Do you include the civilians with the troops?

. THEY ARE part of the burden we have to carry. They make Government too costly. There is no justification for the great salaries they draw. They live far better than the same class at home.

High Pay

Br. Isn't there something to be said for the usual explanation of these high salaries. These civilians are living in exile and in a very trying climate.

G. That is no longer so. Better communications have changed all that. There is a mail twice a week: they can keep in touch with their families at home, and they go to the hills in the hot weather. We would welcome these if they would live among us like Indians. But they isolate themselves. They shut themselves up in their cantonments. The very name has a military flavour, and indeed these cantonments are still under military law. Any house within them may be seized, if the military say they require it. That happend to a mutual friend of ours, though he had built the house for himself.

Br. There are two distinct questions about the army or rather there's one question with two branches. There is the question of principle, India's control over the army, and there is the economic question which would be satisfied by the reduction of the army. Must you insist on both?

G. I must see to it that I have control over my army.

Br. A nation is not fully a nation unless she has it.

The Army

G. THEY TELL ME that I must have this army to protect me against the Pathans, I don't want its protection. I want to be free to take my own course. I may decide to fight them; I may decide to conciliate them. But I want to be free to do it myself. We would agree for a time to maintain some of the white army in India but they tell us that Tommies can't be transferred to the control of an Indian Government.

Br. They can't be transferred without their consent (Gandhiji nods assent), but I should think that many of them would agree to re-enlist, under satisfactory conditions, in an Indian army.

G. yes, that might be the solution, but when the army is reduced, I am afraid, that will add to the number of your unemployed.

Br. Would you, then, if the principle of India's control were granted, be willing to negotiate over the numbers and cost of the reduced white garrison, which you would be willing to maintain for a term of years ?

G. Yes, we will agree to anything of that kind, if it is in the interest of India.

Br. Well, I think that would be rather to our interest than yours.

G. (laughing)—All the same, we would agree to that.

Br. It's the principle of control that makes the difficulty. I don't think you will get that. Reduction is another matter: in some degree you will get that. We are going into the Disarmament Conference presently: this might be part of our contribution to world disarmament.

G. I have said what I want. My terms are known. But they are all holding back, as if they were afraid to say what they will grant. But I am quite prepared to wait.

Br. Things are bound to move slowly, while we are absorbed in our economic crisis. That may be an advantage however.

The Artist: I am only an outsider, but isn't there another difficulty ? Are not the Indian Princes the worst obstacle in your path ?

The Princes

G. THE PRINCES are British officers in Indian dress. A Prince is in the same position as a British officer: he has to obey.

Br. Then can you leave the Princes under the control of the Viceroy ?

G. We must get control for the Indian Government.

Br. But don't they prefer to be under the Viceroy?

G. Ask any of them, and they will say so. But deep down in their heart of hearts, is it possible that they can be content? After all they are the same colour as we are. They are Indians.

Br. But they gain something under the present arrangement, which you could never allow. The bureaucracy exacts politeness from them, and political correctitude, but it allows them to treat their subject pretty much as they please.

G. "Politeness" is not the word for it. Say rather "Abject submission." Not one of them can call his soul his own. The Nizam may start some project or other. An angry letter from the Viceroy is enough to stop him. You know what happened in Lord Reading's time.

Br. Apart from this question of control, is there any hope of Legislature on behalf of your "half-starved millions," if the Princes are to nominate 40 per cent of the membership of the Federal Legislature.

G. We can deal with these as we have dealt with you. It will be much easier.

Br. I think their reply would be rather more brutal than ours. We used the *lathi*: they would use the rifle.

G. That's your race pride. That's right: I like you for it. All of us ought to have it. But you don't realise how much British power in India rests on prestige. Indians are hypnotised by it. You are a brave race, and your reputation enables you to overawe us. I've seen the same thing in South Africa. The Zulus are a fighting race, and yet a Zulu will tremble

at the sight of a revolver, even if it is not loaded. If we get into conflict with the Princes, they won't have the advantage of your prestige. If our people have to face Mahratta troops they will say to themselves: "We are Mahrattas too." Talking of South Africa gives me a precedent for the change that we want to bring about in our relations with the Princes. Swaziland used to be under the control of Downing Street, but when the Union was formed, control was transferred to it. In the same way, we argue that the Princes ought to be transferred to the control of the Indian Government

IX

In the Land of Steel

THE WOODBROOKE Settlement is a place where international peace, friendship and brotherhood are specially cultivated and promoted through the devoted endeavours of Quaker friends like Mr. Alexander who came out to India last year in those perilous times leaving his wife, a chronic cripple, needing his daily attendance, at home; like Mr. Jack Hoyland, who has done much to spread a correct knowledge of India, both, whilst he was a professor in India, and whilst he has been teaching students of some 15 nationalities at Woodbrooke, and like Mr. H. G. Wood, their Director of studies, adored and loved by all. Woodbrooke is also a place of pilgrimage inasmuch as it is an example of wealth earned and used as a trust for the benefit of mankind. It is maintained out of the endowments made by Cadbury of the Chocolate fame, in fact, the settlement house is the house in which Mr. Cadbury lived and where his son serves as Warden.

The spirit of the welcome accorded to Gandhiji may be judged from Mr. Wood's letter to Gandhiji, apologising for his absence from Woodbrooke that evening:

"I am, as the French would say, desolated to find that a prior engagement of long standing prevents me from presiding at the gathering at Woodbrooke this Sunday afternoon, and deprives me of the privilege of welcoming you in the name of your many friends and admirers in Birmingham.

"Many people in England do not understand you and, when we do understand you or think we understand you, we cannot always follow you; but we thank God that at this crisis in India's history and in world-affairs, He has raised up a prophet with such gifts of moral leadership as you possess. We know something of the responsibilities which you are now carrying and we shall be proud if a quiet day in our Woodbrooke fellowship may help to sustain the strength you need for your great task. Our hope is that the labours of the Conference on which you are engaged may issue in such an understanding between India and England, Hindu and Moslem, as shall fulfil the legitimate ideals of Indian nationalism.

"We hope also for such a settlement as may further your own concern for the uplift of the manhood of the peasantry in India; for the great challenge of your life and work to us — a challenge which we know we need and to which we but falteringly respond — lies in the constant reminder which you bring to us of the prayer of Rabindranath Tagore. 'Give me the strength never to disown the poor.'"

And indeed the Poet's prayer may be said to conform to the life and thought of those who have dedicated themselves to the settlement.

The Bishop of Birmingham

THE SCIENTIST Bishop made out a strong case for science and machinery which he said must be made to free man from manual toil, so that he may have all his time or the bulk of it for intellectual work. Gandhiji reminded the Bishop that he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably on the strength of the old adage: 'Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do.' But the Bishop demurred. "Look here," said he, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits." "I know" said Gandhiji laughing, "but if all became Bishops, the Bishops would find their occupation gone."

Four Annas per Day

WE SPENT ABOUT an hour with Dr. and Mrs. Pardhi, who had invited the Birmingham Indians to meet Gandhiji at their place. The friends asked for a message which was given by Gandhiji in a sentence: "You handful of Indians in the British Isles are trustees for the good name of India. So beware!" Then someone asked how best to be of service to India. "Put your talents," said Gandhiji, "in the service of the country instead of converting them into £. s. d. If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to need all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. Instead of fomenting more trouble, patch up those quarrels and stop litigation. If you are an

engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people, and yet full of health and fresh air. There is nothing that you have learnt which cannot be turned to account." The friend who asked the question was a Chartered Accountant and Gandhiji had the name of Kumarappa on his lips to hold it up to him as an example. "Do what Kumarappa, also a Professional Accountant like you, is doing. There is a dire need everywhere for accountants to audit the accounts of Congress and its adjunct associations. Come to India—I will give you enough work and also your hire — 4 annas per day which is surely much more than millions in India get."

The Indian friends were naturally more concerned about the future than the present and I must reproduce what Gandhiji had to say to them. "India will have to go through the fiery ordeal before Englishmen can be made to say: 'We are sorry, we did not do what we should have done long before.' A strong nation would not succumb so easily as we might imagine. And as one wedded to non-violence I should not have England compelled to yield anything without a will. England must be convinced that it is good for her to yield and for India to win her freedom, before she actually surrenders power."

"To convince England," said Mrs. Pardhi, "do you not think you should stay here a little longer?"

"No," said Gandhiji, "I cannot stay beyond my time. I would cease to have any influence here if I overstayed and the people would cease to respond. The influence that I now exercise is only a temporary influence, not permanent. My place is in India, in the midst of my countrymen, who may be called upon to start another campaign of suffering. In fact, the English people seem to respond today because they

know that I represent a suffering people, and when I am suffering with my own countrymen, I would be speaking to them from India as heart speaks to heart."

I MUST MENTION also the visit to Rudolf Steiner's school for curative education. Rudolf Steiner passed away in 1925 but his followers are trying to carry on his work. His aim was to work for a deeper and truer understanding of Humanity, and to understand and appreciate the capacity of every nation for making a contribution to the evolution of the world. He has carried on, what Schiller called, "aesthetic education of humanity." It covered many branches of science, including a better culture of the soil through a better understanding of the physical forces and the laws of astronomy. What we are concerned with here is his educational experiment. They take in their school the mentally and morally defective children, those who are usually given up as incurable. One of the boys we saw in the 'Sunfield' School at Birmingham was a cripple having been the victim of a frightful motor crash and not only lost the use of his limbs but of his brain as well. The curative education is through an observation and understanding of the potentialities of the child to aesthetic influence — such as the beauty of the sun and the moon and stars, of fine physical scenery, of painting, and music, which plays a very large part. Above all, I suppose, the greatest curative used is that of love which clasps in its fold the infirm and the defective and deformed. We heard them sing Latin and Greek chants (which strongly reminded me of Vedic Chants) and German songs and they seemed to take in practically everything. Instead of finding raving maniacs, we found a family of happy

Curative Education

children, who, had we not known, would not be discovered to be defectives at all. In the evening they had a 'play' in celebration of Gandhiji's visit, but we could not go to it. This is an experiment full of promise and deserves the attentive study of psychologists and educationists.

IT WAS A GREAT meeting representing various institutions that they had in the Woodbrooke Hall.

Duty of British Public

"Whereas", said Gandhiji addressing the gathering "to other places I have gone as a matter of business, to deliver my message, have come here as a matter of pilgrimage. I have come as a matter of pilgrimage because this Settlement it was that spared and sent Mr. Horace Alexander to us at a time when we were in need of a friend. It was a time when news of Satyagraha could not be transmitted from India — everything that was sent was censured, the principal men were all in jail. It was then that the Friends came to the conclusion that a mission ought to be sent to India and Mr. Alexander was chosen for the purpose. Not only were you able to spare him but his wife, a cripple spared him. Now you will understand why it is a pilgrimage for me to come here.

"With regard to the work before me, I did not think I should take your time to describe it to you now. The vast majority of the people now know what the Indian National Congress claims for the nation. You know what means we have adopted, perhaps, for the first time in history, to achieve our independence. And you also know how far the nation during the last year was able to live up to its creed. I would like to emphasise upon you the fact that if the work that is now being done at the Round Table Conference is to

bear fruit it will do so only if the pressure of intelligent public opinion is brought to bear upon it. I have often remarked that my true work in England lies outside the Conference, and not in the Conference. In my few public speeches I have not hesitated to throw out a hint that no work was being done in the Conference, that it was marking time and that precious time of those who had come from India and those who were representing British interests in the Conference was being wasted. That being my opinion, I cannot be too insistent that responsible leaders of public opinion in the British Isles should inform themselves of the true nature of the struggle that Indians are carrying on against heavy odds. For, unless you understand the true nature and its inner meaning of this struggle, you will not be able to bring effective pressure to bear on those who are conducting the affairs of the state here.

"I know enough of the composition of this meeting to know that you are all earnest seekers after truth and anxious to do the right, not only especially with regard to this but any cause that deserves the assistance of human beings. And if you will approach this question from this standpoint it is just likely that the deliberations of the Round Table Conference might prove fruitful."

Divide and Rule

ONE OF THE questions that were put to Gandhiji at the end of his speech was whether settlement was not made impossible by Indian representatives not agreeing among themselves on a communal question. Gandhiji while emphatically repudiating the suggestion said, "I know you have been taught to think like that you cannot shake off the spell of the hypnotic suggestion.

My case is that alien rulers have ruled India on the principle of 'Divide and Rule.' No alien Imperial rule could go on in India unless the rulers now coquetted with one and then with the other party. We will continue to be divided so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the wedge. But take out the wedge and the wedge and the split parts will instantly come together and unite. Again, the attainment of unity has been rendered a task of herculean difficulty by the composition of the Conference itself as all the delegates here are nominated, none of them is duly elected. If, for instance, the Nationalist Muslims had been asked to elect their representative it would have been Dr. Ansari. Lastly, we should not forget that even if the present delegate had been elected they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility. We, on the other hand, are here on the sufferance of the British Prime Minister. We are responsible to nobody, we have no constituency to appeal to. Again, we are reminded that unless we agree among ourselves on the communal issue no progress is possible. In the very nature of the things, therefore, each pulls it a different way and to exact the utmost he can. Again, while the delegates are called upon to present an agreed communal solution, they are not told what they would get if they agree and so the incentive that could have made agreement beforehand possible is killed at the very start, rendering agreement very nearly impossible. Let the Government declare that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians agreed or not and you will see that we shall then soon agree. The fact of the matter is that no one feels that he is going to get real live liberty. What

is offered is simply a share in the power of the bureaucracy to exploit India and this sets up an apple of discord in our midst. Further, the Government having made constitution-making dependent upon the solution of the communal question, every party is tempted to pitch its demand as high as possible. If the Government at all meant business it would unhesitatingly accept my suggestion, *viz*, to appoint a judicial tribunal to decide the communal question at issue. If this is done there is every possibility of an agreed solution being reached without the intervention of the judicial tribunal."

Britain's only Function in India

IN REPLY TO a further question asking what would happen in India during the transition period if the British Government abdicated its function, Gandhiji said, "Alien rule is like a foreign matter in an organic body. Remove the poison and the body will at once start recuperating. It is preposterous to suggest that the British Government would be abdicating its function if it withdraws from India. The only function that it is fulfilling today is of exploiting India. Let Britain cease to exploit India and India will immediately revive economically."

The British Bania

"YOU TALK OF the impoverishment of India as being the result of British exploitation" asked another member, "but is it not a fact that the real cause of the agriculturists' misery is the rapacity of the Bania and extravagance of expenditure on the occasion of marriages and funerals. Finally, you charge the British Government with extravagance. But what have

you to say to the extravagance of the Indian Princes.

"The Indian Bania" replied Gandhiji, "is not a patch upon the English Bania and if we were acting violently the Indian Bania would deserve to be shot. But then, the British Bania would deserve to be shot a hundred times. The rate of interest charged by the Indian Bania is nothing compared to the loot carried on by the British Bania through the jugglery of currency and merciless exactions of Land Revenue. I do not know of another instance in history of such an organised exploitation of so unorganised and gentle a race. As for the profligacy of the Indian Princes, while I would have little hesitation, if I had the power, in dispossessing them of their insolent palaces, I would have infinitely less in depriving the British Government of New Delhi. The extravagance of the Princes was nothing compared to the heartless squandering of crores of rupees on New Delhi to satisfy the whim of a Viceroy in order to reproduce England in India, when masses of people were dying of hunger."

The question next asked was: "Have the people of India themselves come to an agreement on fundamentals?" "The Congress has come with an agreed scheme of communal settlement but it is not accepted. Here at the Conference the Congress is only one of the many parties that are said to be represented here. The organic fact, however, is that it is the only representative body speaking for the vast masses in India. It is the one live, organic and independent organisation that has been functioning for close upon fifty years. It is the only organisation that has stood the test of untold suffering. It is the Congress which arrived at a Settlement with the Government and, say

what you will, it is the only organisation that will one day replace the present Government. My claim is that the scheme that it produced through a representative Committee of one Sikh, one Muslim and one Hindu member of its cabinet would stand the test of any judicial tribunal so far as fairness and justness is concerned.

An amusing question was asked by a friend who quoted a letter from the *Manchester Guardian* in which the correspondent questioned Gandhiji's authority to speak for the untouchables as he belonged to the priestly class which had kept that community depressed so far and asked whether Gandhiji himself was not a great hindrance in the way of a settlement. "I never knew" replied Gandhiji, "that I was a Brahmin but I do happen to be a Bania, which is certainly regarded as a term of painful reproach. But let me inform the audience that my community excommunicated me when I came to the English shores 40 years ago and the work that I have been doing entitles me to be called a farmer, weaver and untouchable. I was wedded to the work for the extinction of 'untouchability' long before I was wedded to my wife. There were two occasions in our joint life when there was a choice between working for the untouchables and remaining with my wife and I would have preferred the first. But thanks to my good wife, the crisis was averted. In my Ashram, which is my family, I have several *Untouchables* and a sweet but naughty girl living as my own daughter. As to whether I am acting as a hindrance to a Settlement, I confess I am, for the simple reason that I would not be satisfied with any compromise short of real complete independence for India."

The last question put to Gandhiji was as follows:

"SOMETIMES WE have found it difficult to reconcile the special form of united protest that you have evolved, with an appeal to reason. What is it that makes you sometimes feel that appeal to reason should be put aside in favour of more drastic action?"

Head or Heart

"Up to the year 1906" replied Gandhiji "I simply relied on appeal to reason. I was a very industrious reformer. I was a good draftsman, as I always had a close grip of facts which in its turn was the necessary result of my meticulous regard for truth. But I found that reason failed to produce an impression when the critical moment arrived in South Africa. My people were excited, even a worm will and does sometimes turn — and there was talk of wreaking vengeance. I had then to choose between allying myself to violence or finding out some other method of meeting the crisis and stopping the riot and it came to me that we should refuse to obey legislation that was degrading and let them put us in jail if they liked. Thus, came into being the moral equivalent of war. I was then a loyalist, because, I implicitly believed that the sum total of the activities of the British Empire was good for India and for humanity. Arriving in England soon after the outbreak of the war I plunged into it and later when I was forced to go to India as a result of the pleurisy that I had developed, I led a recruiting campaign at the risk of my life, and to the horror of some of my friends. The disillusionment came in 1919 after the passage of the Black Rowlat Act and the refusal of the Government to give the simple elementary redress of proved wrongs that we had asked for. And so, in 1920, I became a rebel. Since then the

Conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason. Nobody has probably drawn up more petitions or expoused more forlorn causes than I, and I have come to this fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword."

X

Madame Montessori

MADAME MONTESSORI'S meeting with Gandhiji was the meeting of a soul with a soul. She was so deeply touched that she wrote: " Gandhi appears to me as a soul rather than a man. He had been in my thoughts for years and years. I have followed him with my soul. His gentleness, his sweetness was such, that it was as if in the whole world there existed no such thing as harshness; he gave himself freely and fully, as if no limits or obstacles existed; strong direct as a ray of sunshine. It seemed to me that this venerable being might greatly aid the teachers whom I am preparing. The teacher should be open-hearted and generous, should change his own soul that he may come forth

from the harsh world of the adults, that world full of obstacles thwarting the life of humanity. May his meeting with our teachers aid us in the spiritual defence of the child in humanity." *Gadis* and pillows were provided for us to sit on and the children—from the poor borough of Islington—all like little angels, clean and sweet, and simply dressed, with bare legs and feet, gave Gandhiji a right Indian greeting—*Namaskar*. And then the little ones treated us to what they had been taught—rhythmic movement, little acts of concentration and will power, instrumental music and last, but not least, an exercise in silence. It impressed all those present greatly. In Madame Montessori, surrounded by her children, one had a vision of the world set free for the children—children, the only creation of the Maker most akin to Himself. Even if Madame Montessori's educational ambition may not bear full fruit, she will have rendered a unique service to humanity by turning the attention of parents and teachers to the adorable in the child. In sweet musical Italian she gave Gandhiji a brief welcome, which her secretary translated into English. And even the translation thrills one through and through:

"I address myself to the pupils of my course and also to the friends here. I have a great thing to say to you—the Soul of Gandhi—that great Soul of which we are so conscious is here with us, incarnate in his bodily form. The voice which we shall soon have the privilege of hearing is that voice which sounds throughout the world. He speaks with love, and not merely with his voice does he speak but with his whole life. Such a rare thing is this, that when it happens, everv ear listens.

Noble Master! I am proud that the voice which is privileged to give you your welcome here,

should be the voice of one of the Latin races—a voice from Rome, the great city Rome, cradle of the religious thoughts of the West. I wish that I could here present incarnate all the life and thought of the West to do honour to the East. I present you here my students. There are not only my students, but there are friends and the friends of their friends, and their relations gathered here together. But among my students there are people of many many nations. Here met together are the generous-hearted English teachers and many students from India—Italian students, Dutch, German, Danes, Swedes, Czecho Slovakians, Austrians, Hungarians, Americans, Australians, students from New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and from Ireland. They are all here out of love for the child.

The world civilisation and thought of the child this is what links us and brings us together in your presence O Master. For we teach children to live, to live that spiritual life upon which alone can be built up the peace of the world. That is why the students are gathered together here to hear the voice of a Master in the art of life and for all of us—students and their friends, this will be a memorable day in our lives. These 24 little English children, who have prepared themselves and worked for you, are living symbols of the new child that is to be. We all await from you the word."

This had the tremendous effect of smiting all the cords of Gandhiji's heart which, trembling produced a music worthy of the great occasion. It was at once a message and a charter for the parents and children in all parts of the world. I reproduce it here in full.

"MADAME, YOU have overwhelmed me with your words. It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realise the presence of my Maker, Who to me embodies Truth, and in the early part of my career I discovered that if I was to realise Truth I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of Love. And having been blessed with children, I discovered that the law of Love could be best understood and learned through little children. Were it not for us, their ignorant poor parents, our children would be perfectly innocent. I believe implicitly that the child is not born mischievous in the bad sense of the term. If parents would behave themselves whilst the child is growing, before it is born and after, it is a well-known fact that the child would instinctively obey the law of Truth and the law of Love. And when I understood this lesson in the early part of my life, I began a gradual but distinct change in life.

Parents' Responsibility

"I do not propose to describe to you the several phases through which this stormy life of mine has passed, but I can only, in truth and in perfect humility bear witness to the fact that to the extent that I have represented Love in my life, in thought, word, and deed I have realised the "Peace that passeth understanding." I have baffled many of my friends when they have noticed in me peace that they have envied, and they have asked me for the cause of that priceless possession. I have not been able to explain the cause save by saying that if my friends found that peace in me, it was due to my attempt to obey this, the greatest law of our being.

"It was in 1915 when I reached India, that I first became acquainted with your activities. It was in a place called Amreli that I found that there was a little school being conducted after the Montessori system. Your name had preceded that first acquaintance. I found no difficulty in finding out at once that this school was not carrying out the spirit of your teaching; the letter was there, but whilst there was an honest–more or less honest—effort being made, I saw too that there was a great deal of tinsel about it.

Nature as Teacher

"I CAME IN touch, then, with more such schools, and the more I came in touch, the more I began to understand that the foundation was good and splendid, if the children could be taught through the laws of nature—nature, consistent with human dignity, not nature that governs the beast. I felt instinctively from the way in which the children were being taught that whilst they were being indifferently taught, the original teaching was conceived in obedience to this fundamental law. Since then, I have had the pleasure of coming across several of your pupils, one of whom had even made a pilgrimage to Italy and had received your personal blessings. I was looking forward to meeting the children here and you all and it was a great pleasure to me to see these children. I had taken care to learn something about these little children. I had a foretaste of what I saw here, in Birmingham, where there is a school between which and this there is a difference. But I also saw that there also human nature was struggling to express itself. I see the same thing here and it was a matter of inexpressible joy to me that from their childhood the children were brought to understand the virtue of

silence, and how in response to the whisper from their teacher the children came forward one after another in that pin-drop silence. It gave me great joy to see all those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching those movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children, "Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children? We are conducting an experiment amongst the poorest of the children in India. I do not know how far the experiment will go. We have the problem of giving real vital education to these children of India's hovels, and we have no material means.

The Child as Teacher

"WE HAVE TO fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its own honour. And believe me, from my experience of hundreds, I was going to say thousands, of children,—I know that they have perhaps a finer sense of honour than you and I have. The greatest lessons in life — if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn, not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children. Jesus never uttered a loftier or a grander truth then when he said that wisdom cometh out of the mouths of babes. I believe it, I have noticed it in my own experience that if we would approach babes in humility

and in innocence, we would learn wisdom from them.

"I must not take up your time. I have simply given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me; namely, the delicate problem considered in human terms of drawing out the best from these millions of children of whom I have told you. But I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God and if we have faith in that Divinity which presides on the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope, I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are endeavouring to teach those children through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so, I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do but for the children of the paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have the struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

APPENDIX A

Delhi Pact—5th March, 1931

[The following are relevant clauses from an agreement arrived at consequent on the conversations that had taken place between the Viceroy and Gandhiji, in pursuance of which the Congress suspended the Civil Disobedience Campaign and agreed to take part in the deliberations of the second Round Table Conference:]

Clause 2. As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined Federation is an essential part, so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence; external affairs; the position of minorities; the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations.

Clause 6. As regards the boycott of foreign goods there are two issues involved, firstly, the character of the boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement persued with this object in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. But the boycott of non-

Indian goods (except of cloth which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the civil disobedience movement chiefly, if not exclusively, against British goods, and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organised for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England which the settlement is intended to secure. It is therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in conseqence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement, the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

Clause 7. In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods, or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs,— resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

APPENDIX B

Declarations of the Prime Minister

I

[The following is the declaration made by the Prime Minister on the 19th January 1931 at the conclusion of the first Round Table Conference.]

The view of His Majesty's Government in that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government.

His Majesty's Government, whilst making this declaration, is aware that some of the conditions which are essential to the working of such a constitution as is contemplated have not been finally settled, but it believes that as the result of the work done here, they have been brought to a point which encourages the hope that further negotiations, after this declaration, will be successful.

His Majesty's Government has taken note of the fact that the deliberations of the Conference have proceeded on the basis, accepted by all parties, that the

Central Government should be a Federation of all-India, embracing both the Indian States and British India in a bi-cameral legislature. The precise form and structure of the new Federal Government must be determined after further discussion with the Princes and representatives of British India. The range of subjects to be committed to it will also require further discussion, because the Federal Government will have authority only in such matters concerning the States as will be ceded by their Rulers in agreement made by them on entering into Federation. The connection of the States with the Federation will remain subject to the basic principle that in regard to all matters not ceded by them to the Federation their relations will be with the Crown acting through the agency of the Viceroy.

With a Legislature constituted on a federal basis, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature.

Under existing conditions the subjects of Defence and External Affairs will be reserved to the Governor-General, and arrangements will be made to place in his hands the powers necessary for the administration of those subjects. Moreover, as the Governor-General must, as a last resort, be able in an emergency to maintain the tranquillity of the State, and must similarly be responsible for the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, he must be granted the necessary powers for these purposes.

As regards finance, the transfer of financial responsibility must necessarily be subject to such conditions as will ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India. The Report of the Federal Structure Committee indicates some ways of dealing with this

subject including a Reserve Bank, the service of loans, and Exchange policy, which, in the view of His Majesty's Government, will have to be provided for somehow in the new constitution. It is of vital interest to all parties in India to accept these provisions, to maintain financial confidence. Subject to these provisions the Indian Government would have full financial responsibility for the methods of revenue and for the control of expenditure on non-reserved services.

This will mean that under existing conditions the Central Legislature and Executive will have some features of dualism which will have to be fitted into the constitutional structure.

The Provision of reserved powers is necessary in the circumstances and some such reservation has indeed been incidental to the development of most free constitutions. But every care must be taken to prevent conditions arising which will necessitate their use. It is, for instance, undesirable that Ministers should trust to the special powers of the Governor-General as a means of avoiding reponsibilities which are properly their own, thus defeating the development of responsible Government by bringing into use powers meant to lie in reserve and in the background. Let there be no mistake about that.

The Governors' Provinces will be constituted on a basis of full responsibility. Their Ministries will be taken from the Legislature and will be jointly responsible to it. The range of Provincial subjects will be so defined as to give them the greatest possible measure of self-government. The authority of the Federal Government will be limited to provisions required to secure its administration of Federal subjects, and so discharge its responsibility for subjects defined in the constitution as of all-India concern.

There will be reserved to the Governor only that minimum of special powers which is required in order

to secure, in exceptional circumstances, the preservation of tranquillity, and to guarantee the maintenance of rights provided by Statute for the public Services and minorities.

Finally, His majesty's Government considers that the institution in the Provinces of responsible government requires both that the Legislatures should be enlarged, and that they should be based on a more liberal franchise.

In framing the Constitution His Majesty's Government considers that it will be its duty to insert provisions guaranteeing to the various minorities, in addition to political representation, that differences of religion, race, sect or caste, shall not themselves constitute civic disabilities.

In the opinion of His Majesty's Government it is the duty of the communities to come to an agreement amongst themselves on the points raised by the Minorities sub-Commitee but not settled there. During the continuing negotiations such an agreement ought to be reached and the Government will continue to render what good offices it can to help to secure that end, as it is anxious not only that no delay should take place in putting the new Constitution into operation, but that it should start with the goodwill and confidence of all the communities concerned.

The various Sub-Committees which have been studying the more important principles of a Constitution which would meet Indian condition have surveyed a considerable part of the structure in detail and the still unsettled points have been advanced a good way to an agreement. His Majesty's Government, however, in view of the character of the Conferenee and of the limited time at its disposal in London, has deemed it advisable to suspend its work done, and expedients considered for overcoming the difficulties which have

been raised. His Majesty's Government will consider, without delay, a plan by which our co-operation may be continued so that the results of our completed work may be seen in a new Indian Constitution. If, in the meantime, there is a response to the Viceroy's appeal to those engaged at present in civil disobedience, and others wish to co-operate on the general lines of this declaration, steps will be taken to enlist their services.

I must convey to you all on behalf of the Government its hearty appreciation of the services you have rendered not only to India but to this country, by coming here and engaging in these personal negotiations. Personal contact is the best way of removing those unfortunate differences and misunderstandings which too many people on both sides have been engendering between us in recent years. A mutual understanding of intention and difficulty, gained under such conditions as have prevailed here, is by far the best way for discovering ways and means of settling differences and satisfying claims. His Majesty's Government will strive to secure such an amount of agreement as will enable the new Constitution to be passed through the British Parliament and to be put into operation with the active goodwill of the people of both countries.

II

[The Statement made by the Prime Minister to the Round Table Conference at the close of its Second Session, 1st December 1931, is given below.]

1. We have now had two sessions of the Round Table Conference, and the time has come to survey the important work which has been done, first of all, in setting out the problems which in the task of Indian

constitution building we have to surmount, and then in trying to find how to surmount them. The reports presented to us now bring our co-operation to the end of another stage, and we must pause and study what has been done and the obstacles which we have encountered, and the best ways and means of bringing our work to a successful end as rapidly as possible. I regard our discussions and our personal contacts here as of the highest value, and make bold to say that they have raised the problem of Indian constitutional reform far above the mere technicalities of constitution-making; for we have won that confidence in, and respect for, each other which has made the task one of hopeful political co-operation. That, I am confident, will continue to the end. By co-operation alone can we succeed.

2. At the beginning of the year I made a declaration of the policy of the then government, and I am authorised by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration:

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

"In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercisd as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government."

3. With regard to the Central Government, I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty's late Government were prepared to recognise the principle, of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature if both were constituted on an All-India Federal basis. The principle of responsibility was to be subject to the qualification that, in existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General, and that, in regard to finance such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.

4. Finally, it was our view that the Governor General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

5. These were, in broad outline, the features of the new constitution for India as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

6. As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in all-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to persue this plan unswervingly and to do their utmost to surmount the difficulties which now stand in the way of its realisation. In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you will be circulated today as a white Paper to both Houses of Parliament, and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

7. The discussions which have been proceeding during the past two months, have been of value in showing us more precisely the problems we have to solve, and have advanced us towards the solution of some of them. But they have also made it plain that others still require further examination and co-operative consideration. There is still difference of opinion, for instance, as to the composition and powers of the Federal Legislature, and I regret that owing to the absence of a settlement of the key question of how to safeguard the Minorities under a responsible Central Government, the Conference has been unable to discuss effectively the nature of the Federal Executive and its relationship with the Legislature. Again, it has not yet been possible for the States to settle amongst themselves their place in the Federation and their mutual relationship within it. Our common purpose will not be advanced by ignoring these facts nor by assuming that the difficulties they present will somehow solve themselves. Further thought, discussion and reconciliation of different interests and points of view are still required before we can translate broad general aims into the detailed machinery of a workable constitution. I am not saying this to indicate impossibility, nor to foreshadow any pause in our work. I only wish to remind you that we have put our hands to a task which demands alike from His Majesty's Government and from the leaders of Indian opinion care, courage and time, lest when the work is done it may bring confusion and disappointment, and instead of opening the way to political progress may effectively bar it. We must build like good craftsmen, well and truly; our duty to India demands that from all of us.

8. What then is the general position in which we find ourselves as regards a practical programme for the

advancement of our common aims? I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work. The declarations already made repeated today are enough to give confidence in the purpose of the Government and to provide work for the Committees to which I shall refer. I want to keep to business. The great idea of All-India Federation still holds the field. The principle of a responsible Federal Government, subject to certain reservations and safeguards through a transition period, remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governors' Provinces of the future are to be responsibly governed units, enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies in their own sphere.

9. I should explain at once in connection with that last point that we contemplate as one feature of the new order that the North-West Frontier Province should be constituted a Governor's Province, of the same status as other Governors' Provinces, but with the due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier, and that, as in all other Governors' Provinces, the powers entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the Province shall be real and effective.

10. His Majesty's Government also accept in principle the proposition which was endorsed at the last Conference that Sind should be constituted a separate Province, if satisfactory means of financing it can be found. We therefore intend to ask the Government of India to arrange for a Conference with representatives of Sind for the purpose of trying to overcome the difficulties disclosed by the report of the expert financial investigation which has just been completed.

11. But I have digressed from the question of a programme in the light of the accepted factors — Federation

as the aim and self-governing Provinces and the Indian States as its basis. As I have said, our discussions have made it clear to all of us that Federation cannot be achieved in a month or two. There is a mass of difficult constructive work still to be done, and there are important agreements to be sought by which the structure must be shaped and cemented. It is equally plain that the framing of a scheme of responsible government for the Provinces would be a simpler task which could be more speedily accomplished. The adjustments and modifications of the powers now exercised by the Central Government which would obviously have to be made in order to give real self-government to the Provinces should raise no insuperable difficulties. It has therefore been pressed upon the Government that the surest and speediest route to Federation would be to get these measures in train forthwith, and not to delay the assumption of full responsibility by the Provinces a day longer than is necessary. But it is clear that a partial advance does not commend itself to you. You have indicated your desire that no change should be made in the Constitution which is not effected by all embracing Statute covering the whole field, and His Majesty's Government have no intention of urging a responsibility which, for whatever reasons, is considered at the moment premature or ill-advised. It may be that opinion and circumstances will change, and it is not necessary here and now to take any irrevocable decision. We intend and have always intended, to press on with all possible despatch with the federal plan. It would clearly be indefensible, however, to allow present decision to stand in the way of the earliest possible constitutional advance in the North-West Frontier Province. We intend, therefore to take the necessary steps as soon as may be to apply to the North-West Frontier Province, until the

new constitutions are established, the provisions of the present Act relating to Governors' Provinces.

12. We must all, however, realise that there stands in the way of progress, whether for the Provinces or the Centre, that formidable obstacle, the Communal deadlock. I have never concealed from you my conviction that this is above all others a problem for you to settle by agreement amongst yourselves. The first of the privileges and the burdens of a self-governing People is to agree how the democratic principle of representation is to be applied—or, in other words, who are to be represented and how it is to be done. This Conference has twice essayed this task: twice it has failed. I cannot believe that you will demand that we shall accept these failures as final and conclusive.

13. But time presses. We shall soon find that our endeavours to proceed with our plans are held up (indeed they have been held up already) if you cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all parties as the foundations upon which to build. In that event His Majesty's Government would be compelled to apply a provisional scheme for they are determined that even this disability shall not be permitted to be a bar to progress. This would mean that His Majesty's Government would have to settle for you, not only your problems of representation but also to decide as wisely and justly as possible what checks and balances the Constitution is to contain to protect Minorities from an unrestricted and tyrannical use of the democratic principle expressing itself solely through majority power. I desire to warn you that if the Government have to supply even temporarily this part of your constitution, which you are unable to supply for yourselves, and though it will be our care to provide the most ample safeguards for Minorities—so that none of them

need feel that they have been neglected, it will not be a satisfactory way of dealing with this problem. Let me also warn you that if you cannot come to an agreement on this amongst yourselves, it will add considerably to the difficulties of any Government here which shares our views of an Indian Constitution, and it will detract from the place which that Constitution will occupy amongst those of other nations. I therefore beg of you once more to take further opportunities to meet together and present us with an agreement.

14. We intend to go ahead. We have now brought our business down to specific problems which require close and intimate consideration, first of all by bodies which are really committees and not unwieldly conferences, and we must now set up machinery to do this kind of work. As that is being done and conclusions presented, we must be able to continue consultations with you. I propose, therefore with your consent, to nominate in due course a small representative Committee —a working Committee of this Conference which will remain in being in India, with which, through the Viceroy, we can keep in effective touch. I cannot here and now specify precisely how this Committee can best be employed. This is a matter which must be worked out and must to some extent depend on the reports of the Committees we propose to set up. But in the end, we shall have to meet again for a final review of the whole scheme.

15. It is our intention to set up at once the Committees whose appointment the Conference has recommended: (a) to investigate and advise on the revision of the Franchise and constituencies; (b) to put to the test of detailed budgetary facts and figures the recommendations of the Federal Finance Sub-Committee; and (c) to explore more fully the specific financial

problems arising in connection with certain individual States. We intend that these Committees shall be at work in India under the chairmanship of distinguished public men from this country as early in the New Year as possible. The views expressed by you here on the other outstanding Federal problems will be taken into consideration at once, and the necessary steps taken to get better understanding and agreement upon them.

16. His Majesty's Government have also taken note of the suggestion made in para. 26 of the Federal Structure Committee's Third Report, with the object of facilitating an early decision on the distribution among the States of whatever quota may be agreed upon for their representation in the Legislature. It follows from what I have already said that they share the general desire for an early agreement on this question among the States, and His Majesty's Government intend to afford the Princes all possible assistance by way of advice in this matter. If it appears to the Government that there is likely to be undue delay in their reaching agreement amongst themselves, the Government will take such steps as seem helpful to obtain a working settlement.

17. I have already alluded to another matter to which you have given ample evidence that you attach great importance, and to which you will expect me to refer. A decision of the communal problem which provides only for representation of the communities in the Legislatures is not enough to secure what I may call "natural right." When such provisions have made, minorities will still remain minorities, and the Consitution must therefore contain provisions which will give all creeds and classs a due sense of security that the principle of Majority Government is not to be employed to their moral or material disadvantage in the body politic. The Government cannot undertake here and

now to specify in detail what those provisions should be. Their form and scope will need the most anxious and careful consideration with a view to ensuring on the one hand that they are reasonably adequate for their purpose, and on the other that they do not encroach to an extent which amounts to stultification, upon the principles of representative responsible government. In this matter the Committee of Consultation should play an important part, for, here also, just as in regard to the method and proportions of electoral representation, it is vital to the success of the new constitution that it should be framed on a basis of mutual agreement.

18. Now once again we must bid each other good-bye. Great strides have been made, greater, I am sure you will find, than the most optimistic think. I was glad to hear in the course of these debates speaker after speaker taking that view. It is the true view. We have met with obstacles, but one of those optimists to whom humanity owes most of its progress said that "obstacles were made to be overcome." In that buoyancy of spirit and good will which comes from it let us go on with our task. My fairly wide experience of Conferences like this is that the road to agreements is very broken and littered with obstructions to begin with, and the first stages often fill one with despair. But quite suddenly, and generally unexpectedly, the way smoothes itself out and the end is happily reached. I not only pray that such may be our experience, but I assure you that the Government will strive unceasingly to secure such a successful termination to our mutual labours.

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